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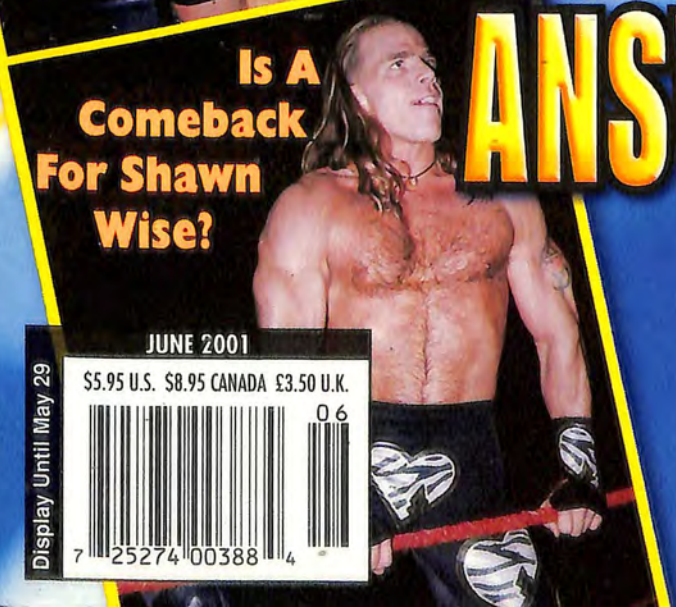

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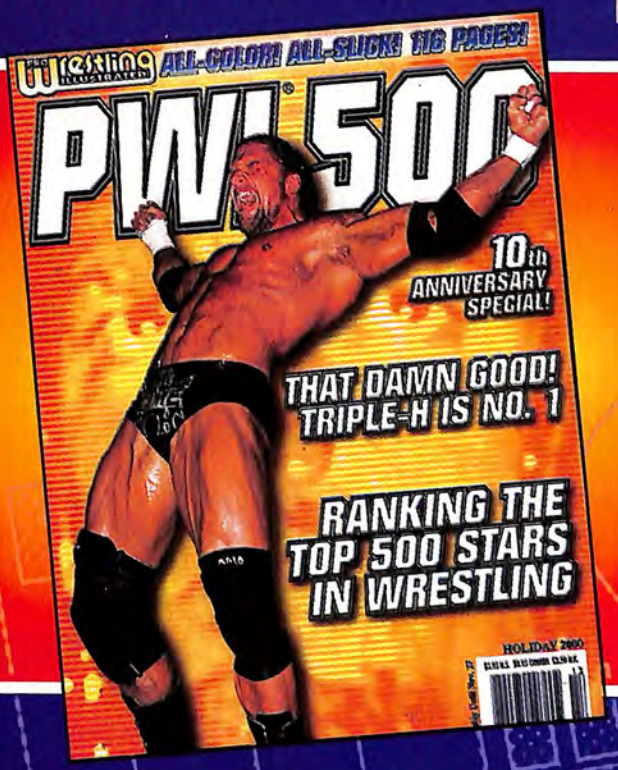
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FROM THE DESK OF...

THERE IS NOT much in the area of promotion that Vince McMahon hasn't explored, attempted, and conquered. This concept of cross-promotion, well, that's new territory for him. The XFL presents countless opportunities for McMahon, and you can rest assured that VMac will take advantage of each one.

Naturally, the fledgling XFL will continue to receive much hype on WWF broadcasts, which is expected and, within reason, just fine. The presence of WWF superstars at XFL events, while the target of XFL critics (including our own Frank Krewda, see page 18), makes perfect sense as well. The WWF's marketing engine is in full gear and humming like a Ferrari.

But I hear a backfire in the distance. While all the hype (both positive and negative) is working to create a new, hot brand, it's the old, hot brand that might ultimately pay a price. Only in its infancy, the XFL has drawn more interest from the mainstream press than the WWF has in its 38 years of existence. Particularly before and after the first week of the season, the XFL had not just stories, but pages in some of the country's biggest newspapers. *Sports Illustrated* featured the league on its cover. Sports talk radio, which doesn't even allow pro wrestling chat, is interviewing everybody from league executives to the guys to run onto the field with the Bubba-cams.

Discussion about the XFL invariably turns into a discussion of the WWF—and while on the surface that appears to be a positive, it could turn out to be a big problem. The mainstream media couldn't care less about the effectiveness of The Rock's people's elbow or Kurt Angle's transition from the amateur to the pro ranks. Invariably, when the subject of wrestling comes up, the discussion centers around the WWF's moral standards and its effect on our culture.

From a public relations standpoint, the WWF is in a unique position. Naturally, they want to take advantage of the platform the XFL provides to turn the world on to their wrestling product. But at the same time, the mainstream press has always shot down the wrestling business—and they don't have to look very hard for ammunition to do so these days.

The standard line of McMahon and Company is that it is up to the parents to monitor what their children watch. And while I realize that there are parents who see nothing wrong with what the WWF is offering, I can't help but feel that there are those parents who are just plain ignorant when it comes to what it is that keeps little Joey out of their hair for several hours a week. All the XFL talk, which invariably leads to WWF talk, might encourage them to take a closer look. And they might not like what they see.

In many ways, the rap against wrestling is unfair. Yes, there are unnecessary sexual references, and maybe the violence is a bit much, but wrestling, particularly in the WWF, offers so much more. We all know that, and maybe some within the mainstream media know it as well, but you're never going to get them to acknowledge it.

There is no question that the WWF has made a conscious effort to lighten up on the sexual themes over the last year or so. Vince McMahon himself admitted in his *Playboy* interview that at times the WWF has gone too far over the edge. But there is a very fine line to walk between being edgy and going over the edge. There is nothing in the WWF Attitude Handbook that says anything about being careful, but with new eyes on the WWF, that might be the wisest course.

* * *

A quickie thought on the XFL: Think back to Week Two, the NBC game between the Chicago Enforcers and the Los Angeles Xtreme. Just before the half, one of the Chicago players, Octavius Bishop, was seriously injured with what was later determined to be a broken fibula and tibia. After an ambulance was driven onto the field and he was carefully loaded onto a stretcher, was anyone but me waiting for one of the Xtreme to dump him to the turf and begin stomping him? Just wondering.

Stu Saks
Publisher

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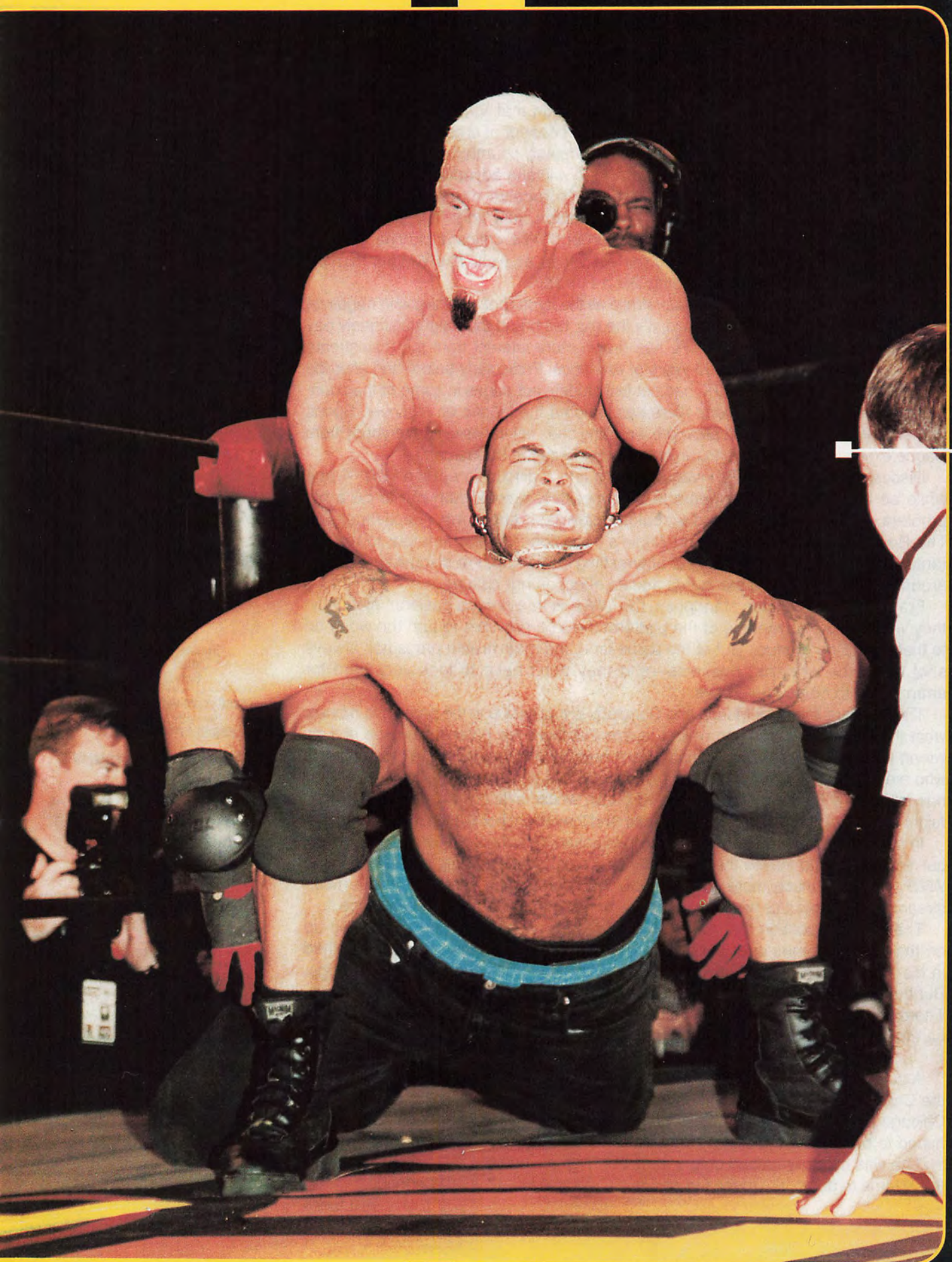

PWI®

JUNE 2001

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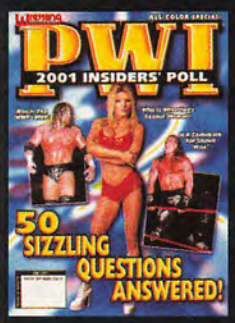

COVER PHOTOS:
Triple-H by Duane Long
Major Gunns courtesy *WCW Magazine*
Shawn Michaels by John S. Pithers

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Teresa Landis

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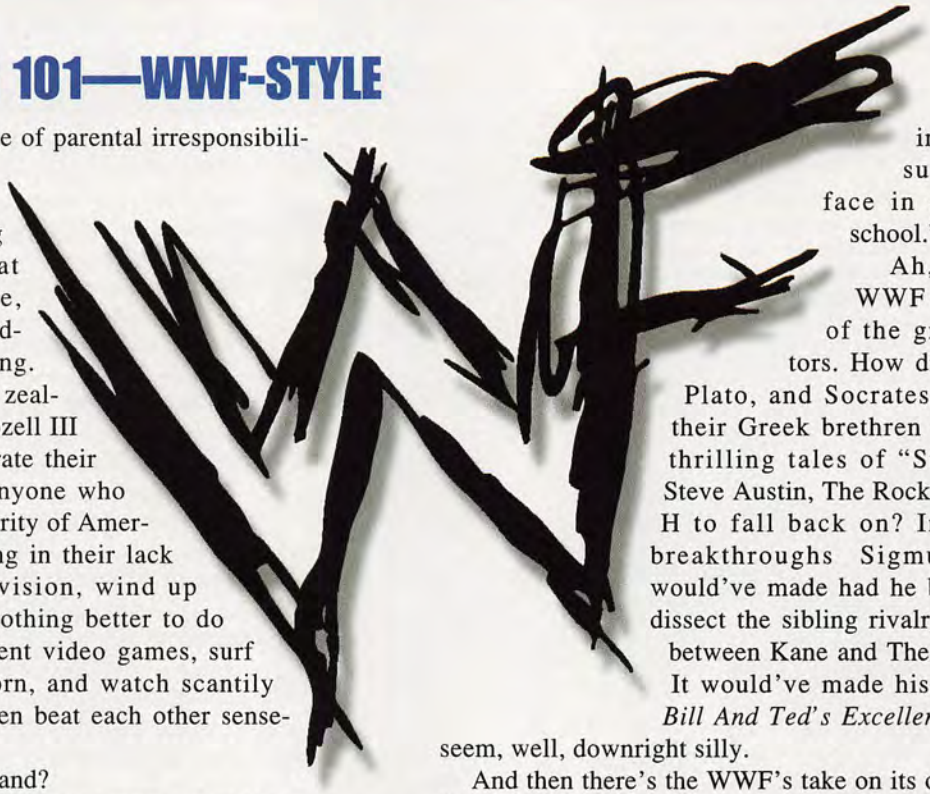
before the bell

Compiled by Will Welsh & Dave Lenker

PARENTING 101—WWF-STYLE



In this golden age of parental irresponsibility, most children have no problem whatsoever viewing the supposed great blight of our time, World Wrestling Federation programming. Though right wing zealots like L. Brent Bozell III continue to proliferate their myopic views to anyone who will listen, the majority of America's youth, reveling in their lack of parental supervision, wind up home alone with nothing better to do than play ultraviolent video games, surf the Internet for porn, and watch scantily clad women and men beat each other senseless.

Ain't America grand?

However, the WWF recognizes that there are parents who still monitor what their children watch, and many of these parents find fault with the raunchy nature of the WWF. That's why, in an act of goodwill and genuine altruism, the WWF would like to offer these unfortunate souls—the children of responsible parents—a little help.

Would-be WWF fans whose federation viewing habits are hindered by lucid parenting should steer Mom and Dad to wwfparents.com. The site, which is decked out in a very un-WWF-like baby blue hue, is meant to provide parents of WWF fans with help in dealing with (a.k.a. explaining away) the adult issues that often arise on episodes of *Raw* and *Smackdown*.

"It's never too early for parents to talk to their kids about the issues they face," reads one item found on the Web site. "We hope that parents and educators will use WWF programming as a springboard for discussing important issues children face in and out of school."

Ah, yes, the WWF as the tool of the great educators. How did Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates ever teach their Greek brethren without the thrilling tales of "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin, The Rock, and Triple-H to fall back on? Imagine the breakthroughs Sigmund Freud would've made had he been able to dissect the sibling rivalry that exists between Kane and The Undertaker. It would've made his findings in *Bill And Ted's Excellent Adventure* seem, well, downright silly.

And then there's the WWF's take on its own product. Get this:

"The WWF's two flagship programs, *Raw Is War* and *WWF Smackdown,* are action/adventure soap operas ... The activities performed on our programs are not meant to be emulated by our viewers, and do not represent socially responsible methods for resolving conflicts."

Well, duh. Tell us something we didn't know.

Is the Web site useful? Very much so, actually, especially to concerned parents who want to let their kids watch *Raw* and *Smackdown* but don't know how to discuss the happenings on the show afterward. The site just happens to be something that's easily ridiculed, given the nature of the federation.

We give it four suplexes out of five.

OKAY, NOW WE KNOW

Whoever came up with the title for Chyna's book, *If They Only Knew,* must be pretty damn smart. Big picture of Chyna on the cover … *If They Only Knew* in big type … logical first question to pop into your mind is, "Okay, Chyna, if we only knew *what?"*

Next thing you know, you're up there at the register at the bookstore, credit card and book in hand, ready to dive into the world of Joanie Laurer. *What? What? What? If we only knew* ***what,*** *Chyna? What? What?*

Hell, you slap a title like that on the book and we damn well better be amazed by what we find out from reading the book, so there's a little pressure on the author. Well, maybe you won't be *amazed* by everything you read, but there is a lot of juicy stuff in it, and you will have a greater appreciation of what this woman has accomplished.

Those who got a sense of how tough Joanie Laurer's childhood was by reading the piece we did on her in *Wrestling True Life Stories, Volume I* a few years ago will get a lot more than a sense after reading this. Laurer makes her opinions on her mother, father, and stepfathers crystal-clear.

And you can't help but feel bad for a teenage girl who walks out of her controlling mother's house rather than get forced into drug rehab just because Mom *suspects* she's on drugs (and ignores the negative results of her urine test). When she goes to live with her doting father, she finds him to be the ultimate schemer, a man who somehow manages to pay for her surgery to remove an ovarian tumor by claiming it on his ex-wife's insurance. Guess who Mom blamed.

The years have done little to wash away the bitterness that built up inside Laurer as she grew up. Here's her reaction to finding out her father was hoping to contact her at her hotel during a WWF tour:

"In some recent magazine article about me, he is quoted as saying I will suffer deep psychological damage for not contacting or letting him in my life. Yeah, I'll make contact. My fist and your face. Yeah, yeah, that's what I'll do. My fist. Your face."

Fear not, this isn't 300 pages on Joanie Laurer's horrible childhood, though there is quite a bit on it. There are colorful tales about her training at Killer Kowalski's school ("You want to learn to wrestle? Two thousand dollars. No checks," he tells her just minutes into their first phone conversation), her first meeting with Triple-H and Shawn Michaels in a hotel (not what you're thinking), the ups and downs of her romance with Hunter, and the dramatic night she became the first woman to win the Intercontinental title (Jeff Jarrett could have easily skipped out on the match).

Parents be warned: *If They Only Knew* has quite a bit of profanity and is sexually graphic in spots.

For those who prefer a book that's a quick and easy read, this might be just what you're looking for.

We give it four suplexes out of five.

THE STUPID FILES

•On the very night Eric Bischoff was reinstated as the president of World Championship Wrestling, he spoke about his future as an on-air personality on *WCW Live*. Here's what he had to say:

"WCW started the wrestler vs. the company strategy, and it started with the NWO when Scott [Hall] and Kevin [Nash] came in and made a stand against WCW. It grew when the NWO grew as an organization. It was the wrestlers vs. the establishment. The WWF, to varying degrees, copied that format when they made DX characters and positioned Steve Austin against the owner of the company. But that's a story we've been telling since 1996. It's a story that the WWF has been telling since sometime in, maybe, 1998. It's a story that is maybe five or six years old. It's been told in so many different ways, with so many different people, that, quite frankly, I'm a little tired of it. If we're not going to tell that story, then there's no role for someone like Eric Bischoff. I'm not a wrestler. So unless I'm acting in my role of president, there's no place for me [on air]."

So what does WCW do on the first *Nitro* after those comments were made? It forms a very NWO-like clique consisting of WCW (storyline) CEO Ric Flair, Scott Steiner, Lex Luger, Jeff Jarrett, Buff Bagwell, and Road Warrior Animal.

Hearing aids, anyone?

•Since we're already talking about WCW's corporate ignorance, let's continue down that road, okay?

As you found out in the May 2001 issue of *PWI,* one of the reasons former WCW color analyst Mark Madden was fired from his position was because he made unauthorized on-air comments about Scott Hall. Fair enough, right?

Wrong.

If WCW fired Madden for making comments about Hall, WCW should have also fired the dopes who were responsible for producing the January 1, 2001, episode of *Nitro* that didn't air in the U.S. because it was pre-empted. The program, which *did air* in WCW's international markets and was basically a *Nitro* year-in-review, featured, yup, you guessed it, that unmentionable Scott Hall in a match against Sid Vicious.

Okay, let's get this straight.

Mark Madden makes on-air comments about Scott Hall.

Mark Madden gets fired for said comments.

Knowing that Madden had been fired for said comments, WCW produces a best-of program two weeks after the fact that features none other than Scott Hall.

Hmmmmmm. It must be okay to feature a Scott Hall match—as long as you don't say the guy's name.

"Did you see the neck of that lanky, raven-haired gentleman snap back when Sid Vicious dropped him with that clothesline, Tony?"

Just when you thought the hypocrisy surrounding the whole commenting on Scott Hall situation couldn't get any worse (remember that "Diamond" Dallas Page and Kevin Nash still have their jobs), WCW proves that its hypocrisy knows no bounds with this latest incident.

Let us hope that with Bischoff and Fusient in charge of the company, things will change.

Of course, it seems like we've been saying something like that for years now, so who the hell knows what's going to happen.

•Hey, at least this should make WCW feel better about itself: The WWF isn't "Stupid File"-free this month.

A couple of months ago, WWF officials essentially banned the piledriver because of its inherent danger. There's nothing quite like having your neck shrunk because the top of your skull is driven into the mat—just ask "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin. And though you still might see a few WWF wrestlers use a piledriver here or there, the frequency of the move's usage has gone down drastically, which is why The Undertaker introduced his last ride version of the power bomb as his new finisher upon his return.

Oops.

See, we're pretty sure that when the WWF banned the piledriver that it didn't want its superstars to replace the move with one that's even more inherently dangerous—but that's exactly what the last ride is.

On numerous occasions, 'Taker has been unable to successfully get his opponent into proper position for the maneuver, putting many opponents in a precarious position: upside-down with their heads pointed directly at the mat. On the January 14 *Raw,* however, 'Taker almost did the unthinkable: He came damn close to seriously injuring the WWF's top meal ticket, The Rock.

Because 'Taker was unable to successfully hoist Rock onto his shoulders on his first attempt, Rock dangled upside-down, his head swaying back and forth only a few inches above the mat. Luckily for all involved, Rock managed to put his arms down and catch himself. If he hadn't, he certainly would've been dropped on his head, and who knows how serious his injuries could have been.

Maybe, just maybe, it's time for 'Taker to go back to the tombstone.

(continued on page 10)

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WEAR-DOWN HOLDS

1. Airplane spin	21. Face rake	41. Leg lock
2. Arm drag	22. Fireman's carry ram	42. Leg sweep
3. Arm lock	23. Flying body press	43. Manager interference
4. Asian spike	24. Flying clothesline	44. Monkey flip
5. Atomic drop	25. Flying drop kick	45. Overhead toss
6. Bear hug	26. Flying elbow drop	46. Pole ram
7. Bite	27. Flying head butt	47. Reverse chin lock
8. Body slam	28. Flying mare	48. Rolling scissors
9. Body tackle	29. Forearm smash	49. Rope burn
10. Bulldog	30. Foreign object	50. Russian sickle
11. Chicken wing	31. Full nelson	51. Savate kick
12. Choke slam	32. Giant swing	52. Scissors grip
13. Claw	33. Grapevine	53. Shoulder breaker
14. Clothesline	34. Hair pull	54. Slingshot
15. Cross body block	35. Hammer lock	55. Snap mare
16. Double axehandle	36. Head lock	56. Step-over toe hold
17. Drop kick	37. Head stomp	57. Suplex
18. Eagle split	38. Hip roll	58. Surfboard
19. Elbow smash	39. Irish whip	59. Turnbuckle smash
20. Eye gouge	40. Knee drop	60. Wrist lock

SET-UP HOLDS

61. Abdominal stretch	71. Cradle	81. Power bomb
62. Avalanche	72. Crucifix	82. Power slam
63. Backbreaker	73. DDT	83. Scorpion deathlock
64. Backroll press	74. Figure four	84. Sleeper
65. Belly to belly	75. Flying leg drop	85. Slingshot suplex
66. Big splash	76. Gourd buster	86. Spine buster
67. Boston crab	77. Hurricanrana	87. Stunner
68. Brain buster	78. Moonsault	88. Sunset flip
69. Camel clutch	79. Neckbreaker	89. Superplex
70. Cobra clutch	80. Piledriver	90. Texas cloverleaf

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WRESTLER'S NAME (DO NOT USE ANY REAL PRO WRESTLER NAMES)

WEAR-DOWN HOLDS: Choose 10 of the holds at the left numbered 1-60. Only use a hold once.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____
5 _____

6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____
10 _____

SET-UP HOLDS: Choose 5 of the holds at the left numbered 61-90. Only use a hold once.

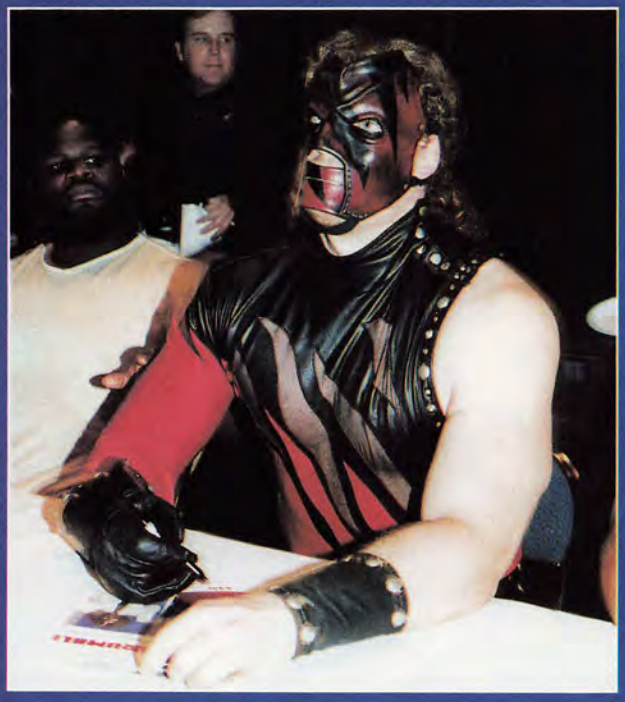
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____
5 _____

FINISHING HOLD: Create your own custom final maneuver or choose a hold from our list.

_____

caption me!

Think you're a better writer than the editors here at *PWI?* Here's your chance to prove it, punk! This picture of an autograph-signing Kane (Who knew the guy was even literate? Can you imagine him in penmanship class?) needs a short, concise, and downright uproarious caption. If you think you're up to the task, e-mail your oh-so-witty quips to PWIFocus@aol.com or throw a stamp on an envelope and drive the postal workers of America even closer to the brink by mailing your suggestions to "Caption Me!" Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Three months from now, we'll share with you the best of the bunch—and the funnier the better.



WE HEARD THAT!

"Scott [Hall] has all the talent in the world. I hope to God that Scott can start to get on the right path of his life. That's a decision he can only make for himself. When the time is right for Scott Hall, I'm sure he'll be back in this business and make a huge impact. I believe somewhere deep in Kevin Nash that there's a competitor. That's not the guy you watch on TV who doesn't give a crap. I believe Kevin Nash would love to return to the WWF to prove how good he can be. When his contract is up, I believe [it will happen]."

—Triple-H, in an interview on *Byte This*

"There's no reason to try to get the square peg in the round hole. Our interest in Rob Van Dam as a talent is mild. We have a casual interest."

—Jim Ross, discussing the possibility of Rob Van Dam signing with the WWF on *Slam! Wrestling*

"My dad thinks I'm a bimbo."

—XFL cheerleader Envy, discussing her career choice in *Maxim* magazine

"When I heard about the WWF connection, I wondered what's going to happen when you score a touchdown. Is the cornerback going to pull out a .45 and plug you as you cross the line?"

—New York/New Jersey Hitmen running back Keith Elias, discussing the WWF-XFL connection in *Maxim* □

MARCH'S BEST

I think I can, I think I can…
—Greg Wadsworth, Jonesboro, AR

Shortly after being noticed on an independent card, Dave and Scott Futera, a pair of conjoined twins attached from the top of Scott's skull to Dave's small intestine, were invited to make an appearance on *The Jerry Springer Show*, where they debuted as the first conjoined *pimps* to make a successful transition to the world of pro wrestling.

—Jerry Petry, West Chester, PA

Dave Patera does his best to dispel rumors that he is the long-lost brother of strongman *Ken* Patera by setting up 400-pound Scott Furie for a power bomb, then realizing Furie is at least 350 pounds more than he can handle.

—Tony Romeo, San Jose, CA

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RINGSIDE

With Will Welsh

The WWF's signing of former ECW World champ Justin Credible was an ominous sign for ECW's future. The WWF said it would not sign anyone from ECW's talent roster until it felt ECW was pretty much doomed.

FROM ALL APPEARANCES, ECW is going under. In some ways, it's amazing that there still *is* an ECW to talk about—even though the three letters now stand more for what was than the promise of what is to come.

As of this writing, ECW hadn't run a show in more than a month and only had its Barely Legal pay-per-view to look forward to. But even that show was over a month away as this issue was going to press. And to make matters worse for **Paul Heyman**, the WWF's self-imposed ban on signing ECW talent has been lifted.

For the longest time, WWF officials said they'd try to avoid signing away any ECW wrestlers until they felt they had to. The WWF reportedly wanted to give Heyman time to get his books in order and try to keep the company alive before tampering with the company's roster. But former ECW World champion **Justin Credible** was the first to sign with the federation, and shortly after that announcement was made, **Jim Ross** announced that reigning ECW Unified champion **Rhino** and former ECW World champion **Jerry Lynn** had verbally committed to the WWF as well.

Paul Heyman took ECW from a little independent promotion and turned it into one of the most revolutionary federations in the history of wrestling. Sadly, it looks like ECW's days are numbered.

In an interview with *Slam! Wrestling*, Ross denied rumors that the WWF was signing ECW talent just to prevent a WCW-led talent raid on the ECW roster from happening:

"It has nothing to do with WCW," Ross said. "It has to do with the status of ECW. The status of ECW is an unfortunate one, as everybody knows. I haven't talked to Paul Heyman, so anything I say about ECW is only based on some of the things I read and some of the things I hear. It's obvious they're having financial difficulties. I don't think I'm out of line for saying that. And it's unfortunate that because of those financial difficulties that a lot of their talent haven't been paid ... So, we looked at it as an opportunity to acquire the services of some of these individuals who need to get their financial situations back under control."

In his weekly "Ross Report" on wwf.com, Ross also made a point to say that, should ECW shut down for good, the WWF would be very interested in bringing in Heyman as part of its creative team:

"... all of Paul's fans are clamoring for him to join the federation. I agree, but that's not our call or decision. It's Paul Heyman's decision and his alone. I'll drink his Kool-Aid, but he's got to be on board to serve it up!"

Even if Heyman somehow manages to resuscitate ECW, there will still be problems that Heyman (or any new owner) will have to address. Dissension has crept into what was once the sport's most tight-knit locker room, and many of the wrestlers still technically on the roster might not want to be part of a revamped ECW. Even former World champ **Steve Corino,** one of Paul E.'s most vocal supporters in the past, has seemingly lost faith:

"Everyone is well-aware of the situation in ECW," said Corino in one of his weekly commentaries on stevecorino.com. "I would be lying if I said that I was happy with the situation. When you buy a house and a car and have a family, you need to pay the bills ... If management is upset because I am upset, then that is too bad. I will never bury ECW or its management, because even if they never paid me again, they are still the promotion that made me what I am today, and I will never forget that."

There is still hope that Heyman can save ECW, but as each day passes without word of an ECW-saving deal, it's looking more and more like the little promotion that could can't.

ECW isn't the only federation losing some talent these days. WCW has also seen its roster trimmed, but in that promotion's case, it's been voluntary. Fired from WCW as part of cost-cutting measures were **Paisley, Tygress, Leia Meow, Major Gunns,** and **Daffney.** I can see why WCW let the first three go, but Major Gunns and Daffney? Daffney brought more energy and excitement to the ring than most of the *men* on the roster, and Gunns, well, she happens to be a personal favorite.

At least **Stacy Keibler** (my all-time personal favorite) is still with WCW. All WCW has to do now is put her back on TV.

With the XFL in full swing and much of **Vince McMahon's** time delegated to the running of the new football league, more than a few WWF insiders are saying that **Trish Stratus** positioned (if that's the appropriate verb) herself quite nicely in the months leading up to the XFL's launch.

"I think it's pretty obvious what Trish did," said one WWF source close to the situation. "She cajoled Vince into a relationship, knowing full well that once the XFL was underway, he'd have to devote much of his time to the league. Of course, whenever Vince isn't around now, Trish becomes something of a de facto dictator. And nobody's going to cross her, because crossing her is tantamount to crossing Vince, and everyone knows you don't cross the boss. And you don't see any of this on TV because Trish knows that if Vince knew to what extent she was using him, she'd be gone. But you should see her backstage when Vince isn't there. She acts like she's **Linda McMahon** or something. It's crazy."

While it's been hard to substantiate these rumors, one thing is pretty clear. Although his daughter, **Stephanie,** is married to **Triple-H,** Vince sure gives the Trish Stratus-managed **Kurt Angle** a lot of leeway when it comes to his matches with "The Game."

Despite being a locker room favorite, **Midian** has been released by the WWF ... **Johnny Ace,** who was brought into WCW as part of the creative team during the **Vince Russo** regime, looks to have the full support of **Eric Bischoff** ... Kurt Angle has confirmed that his autobiography is in the works. Look for the as-of-yet-untitled book to be released in late-summer or early-fall ... If you see Vince Russo anywhere, please let us know. We think he might have dropped off the face of the planet ... Congrats to **Christopher Daniels** and **Michael Modest.** Despite having a less-than-stellar match on *Nitro* in January, the two independent standouts have been signed by WCW—broken legs and all ... Because of his full-time return to the WWF roster, **Shawn Michaels** plans on selling the Shawn Michaels Wrestling

(Continued on page 98)

Tygress, Paisley, Leia Meow, Major Gunns, and Daffney were all given their releases from WCW this winter. Despite her lack of TV time, Stacy Keibler (dressed as Miss Hancock) somehow retained her job.

In focus

By Dave Lenker

As beautiful and talented as ECW's Francine is, what happens to her if ECW does, indeed, fold? She's trying to remain optimistic about her future, at least publicly.

LIFE AFTER WRESTLING?

She didn't even want to think about it.

You could see it in the look on her face, the way she carried herself, and, most of all, in what she said and what she wrote in her Web site diary for all to see.

Francine doesn't want to face life after ECW (life after wrestling actually). Too depressing. But it looks like she'll have to do it very soon.

I didn't get a chance to talk to her much when she stopped by our office with Jasmin St. Claire and The Blue Boy for a photo shoot in late-January. We wanted to get as much time with her in the photo studio as possible, and besides, it was an awkward time to be talking to anyone in ECW.

The company's future looked more and more bleak as more and more days passed with no announcement from Paul Heyman regarding either the sale of the company or a new TV deal.

No house shows scheduled, top guys leaving for either the WWF or WCW—I felt uncomfortable asking ECW people about the promotion's future this winter. (They usually tell you they don't know much more than anyone else.)

All signs, of course, point to the fact that ECW doesn't have a future. While you feel good for mainstays like Rhino and Justin Credible and Yoshihiro Tajiri—all of whom should start cashing big paychecks in the WWF within the next few months—you forget about the people who will inevitably get left behind.

Newcomers to ECW like Joey Matthews and Christian York and E.Z. Money aren't far removed from the independent circuit. They can go back to that life and hope they've done enough to get a look from someone in the Big Two.

I have to believe Tommy Dreamer will find another job in wrestling—probably something behind the scenes—if he wants it. The Sandman will find enough wrestling work to keep him happy, I think, and he has a bar and wrestling school to keep him busy, too.

Though she's one of the most talented and dedicated female performers in this business, Francine is one who might slip through the cracks.

"The Queen Of Extreme" has seven long—and sometimes quite painful—years of her life invested in ECW. Francine has taken one for the team time and again, suffering a fractured pelvis, broken nose, and too many bumps, bruises, sprains, and strains for even her to count. Yet she always came back, even hobbling to ringside on crutches when needed. The Pit Bulls, Shane Douglas, Tommy Dreamer, Raven, and Justin Credible were all better (and more "over") as a result of having her as a "head cheerleader" for a while.

For one, Francine has never expressed much interest in working full-time for another promotion. She wants to work with her ECW family. "When ECW was working four nights a week, I couldn't wait for a break. Now I'd kill to go four nights a week. But I know patience will prevail," she wrote in her online diary on February 3.

Optimistic all the way, at least publicly.

We must also consider that as far as women in wrestling go, it's a buyer's market right now, meaning there are a lot of talented women available, but not many spots available on Big Two rosters. In fact, WCW just *released* Major Gunns, Tygress, Paisley, Daffney, and Leia Meow. The WWF, meanwhile, already has Lita, Stephanie, Terri, Trish, Jackie, Molly, Kat, and Ivory. Is there an opening there?

If you're a banker, an insurance salesman, a nurse, a plumber, or an editor, you can find another job if you lose yours. If you're a wrestling valet ...

"ECW isn't dead. It's just taking a break," she wrote at the end of her diary entry, which gives no indication the end for ECW is even near.

I wish that were true, but logic tells me it isn't. And assuming it is, I hope we haven't seen the last of "The Queen Of Extreme."

RANDOM THOUGHTS

•Why did the first XFL broadcast feature wrestling-style promos from Steve Austin and The Undertaker during the game? This, to me, is akin to broadcasters overhyping a pay-per-view in the middle of the pay-per-view. You don't really need to sell the XFL to the people who are already watching an XFL game, right?

•My overall impression of the XFL after the first few weeks of play? I'm sick of talking about the XFL and its chances of becoming a hit with the masses.

•Just when we thought The Kat was going to actually bare it all live on *Raw* on February 5 (um, sure), RTC interrupted her, but she could have dropped her coat in the time it took the RTC folks to make it all the way to the ring, right? I don't think she's as committed to this nudity thing as she says.

•I'd love to see what the WWF could do with someone with the energy and enthusiasm of Daffney.

•I never thought I'd say the segments of WCW TV featuring Lex Luger were the ones I most looked forward to seeing, but the segments of WCW TV featuring Lex Luger are the ones I most look forward to seeing.

•I wonder if Missy Hyatt was really kidding when she said during a recent interview that she'll have to enter a witness protection program once her tell-all autobiography comes out later this year. This figures to be the juiciest of all the wrestling books, folks.

We all know The Kat isn't shy about showing us her body. But if she were really committed to stripping on *Raw*, could RTC stop her?

•Has anyone's stock ever dropped faster than Rob Van Dam's? The WWF takes Rhino, Lynn, and Credible, and is expected to take Tajiri, while WCW expresses strong interest in Super Crazy, and suddenly RVD's name is barely mentioned. Strange.

•A request of the new regime in WCW: Give us less of The Natural Born Thrillers.

•A request of the WWF: Please do away with the 24/7 hardcore title rule? It makes the lives of those who have to keep track of all title changes much too difficult.

(Have a comment or question about "In Focus" or anything else you see in ***PWI?*** *You can contact Dave Lenker via e-mail at PWIFocus@aol.com.)* □

Off the TOP ROPE

By Brandi Mankiewicz

If you wish to contribute to Brandi's mailbag, send your letters to:

TOP ROPE
Box 1148
Ft. Washington, PA 19034

Or send e-mail to:
OffTheTopRope @yahoo.com

(Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of the letter writers and Brandi Mankiewicz herself. They do not necessarily reflect the editorial views of this magazine.)

IT SEEMS LIKE everyone these days is anti-ECW. Even my fellow ***PWI*** *staffers are harping about the apparent death of ECW so much that you'd swear they were all standing around, ready to pull the plug on the life support machine themselves. It's like they've just realized that ECW is dying. Gee, haven't they been reading my columns? I know it's not like me to toot my own horn, but I've been warning everyone about this for months. Did anyone care to heed my warnings? Of course not. That'll teach everyone to ignore the redhead.*

I've been a vocal ECW detractor, but maybe it's because I foresaw a bleak future when everyone else was googly-eyed over ECW's TNN deal. Call me crazy for wanting more stability in ECW before bestowing world title status on it. I could go on about the lack of foresight, mismanagement, and sleight-of-hand maneuvers used to keep both wrestlers and fans loyal, but not this time. The legend of Paul Heyman will be told and retold for many years to come. And who knows, maybe soon Heyman will be leading ECW 2.0 to a new start. Remember, even dreamers like Heyman can be your champion, too.

Dear Ms. Mankiewicz,

Your recent commentary concerning The Undertaker was very offensive—not to mention blatantly ignorant. If you knew anything at all about his stellar career, you'd agree that he doesn't have to wrestle to prove himself. Mark Calloway is a "Bad Ass" in the truest sense of the word. This he has proven time and again. I applaud 'Taker's transformation not only for becoming a somewhat more reachable character, but also for being true to himself. As for your opinion of The Undertaker, maybe the last ride is just what you need to change your attitude.

TINA M. HARVEY
Goshen, AR

Dear Ms. Harvey,

Geez, you Underredneck fans are touchy. I know all about the storied career of Mark Calloway and, yes, he has accomplished much during his career. But what has he done lately? Nothing of worth. Yes, he is a former world champion, but so are The Ultimate Warrior, Tommy Rich, and David Arquette. Face it, 'Taker's best days are behind him, and without the specter of his undead persona, he's a mere shell of his former self. For Mark Calloway to call himself The Undertaker is about as useful as Paul Roma saying that he's a former member of The Four Horsemen. If Mark Calloway wants me to respect him as a legitimate competitor, he needs to find a new name to fit his new look. The only thing scary about The Underredneck now is the way he executes his last ride finisher. He should stop doing it unless he wants to send his opponents to meet a real undertaker.

Dear Brandi,

What do think of Elix Skipper? Man, that guy could become a star, I think, if he really put his mind to it and dropped Team Canada.

The other thing is what do you think of Sting? I'm still only 13, and he used to be my idol and all when I was younger. With his long absences, though, I know he's not dedicated to the sport anymore. Who do you think would be a good role model right now?

JOHN
Adidasta@aol.com

Dear John,

There are several good role models in professional wrestling today, and Elix Skipper isn't one of them. If you're a WWF fan, there's The Goodfather. Sure, he used to treat his women like tawdry Twinkies, but he has come to learn that women are more than entrepreneurial commodities. He now appreciates women like Ivory for their minds and nothing more. Over in WCW, Animal knows the value of family. If it wasn't for his brother/WCW creative team member Johnny Ace, big brother Animal would probably be touring Europe and

Dear God, Edge! Hold on for your life! Underredneck can be deadly with this move. Whatever you do, don't let go!

Australia with the rest of the old WWF has-beens. If you still consider ECW a promotion, there are a few role models there as well ... as of press time, at least. An obvious one is The Blue Boy, who overcame medical problems as a child, then overcame his girth as an adult. Blue Boy is now a svelte stud with a gorgeous babe on his arm to boot. Another role model would be Paul Heyman. He's living proof that this world needs dreamers. If it wasn't for his dream of revolutionizing the sport, he might have had time to move out of his parents' house. As for Sting, I've given my opinion of him often in past columns. Turn to page 20 and count the money in your piggy-bank.

Well hello there, Queen,

Just thought I'd see if I could get your take on the signing of Justin Credible by the WWF. Do you think that he'll reaffirm his ties with Triple-H and X-Pac once he comes back in? Let's hope they don't stick that yellow jockstrap on him and make him a "Man O' War" again.

Do you think that this and rumored other signings spell out the death of ECW? After all, Jim Ross had gone on record as saying that the WWF wouldn't sign any ECW talent until the future of the promotion could be assessed.

Cheers.

THOMAS SHAW
secondtuenon_220@hotmail.com

Hello there, Thomas,

First off, never believe the hype of the company barker. The WWF isn't going to give away all of its secrets, especially where wrestlers are concerned. The WWF has already signed Justin Credible, and I know that there are at least two more ECW wrestlers on their way to Stamford to ink contracts. Where this leaves the future of ECW remains to be seen. But why should these guys be loyal to a company that can't give them the stability they need? Justin Credible has a family to worry about. Going to the WWF is best for him and his clan. If that's bad for ECW, well, tough noogies. I'm sure he'll be happy to receive his paycheck on a regular schedule ... even if he has to wear his jockstrap on his head again in order to get it.

Dear Queen,

I am curious. I remember in one of your first appearances in PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED, you said you would make some references to Gino Hernandez, but you, like many other people, forget legends who have sadly left us. People like you forget about guys who busted their tails for this sport and did it with class, such as Rick Rude, Kerry Von Erich, Dino Bravo, Eddie Gilbert, and Gino, plus many more who don't get mentioned as much as Andre, Pillman, or Owen. I would just like you writers at PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED to remember some of the wrestlers who helped sell your magazines and make this sport as great as it is. Rest in peace, heroes, you will never be forgotten.

KYLE CUMMINGS
Hall77788@aol.com

Dear Kyle,

If you paid any attention to that little colored box in the first column on page 16, you'd realize that I pay homage to Gino Hernandez every time I write my slightly modified version of his tagline "I am your champion." I am reminded too often of the many legendary wrestlers who left us early. But I don't dwell on the subject. There's too much going on in wrestling to be melancholy over stuff that happened years ago. If you miss Eddie Gilbert, just remember that Missy Hyatt's tell-all autobiography is due out soon. I'm sure you'll read enough about Eddie in there to keep your mind numb for weeks. Plus, there are good surrogates on today's rosters. If you can't find a suitable replacement, I suggest seeking therapy.

The Blue Boy is a role model for everyone. He may be half the Meanie he used to be, but he's man enough to win over sultry babe Jasmin St. Claire.

Letter of the month (taken verbatim—with slight censoring—from the actual letter to share my torture with you all):

Dear Brandi,

I believe that your factually challenged and full of s___.

Have a nice day:

"The Sandman"
bluejackets2000@coyoteshockey.com

PS: I am not Spanish. Yer jest full o's___. I'm from Our Kansas.

Dear "Sandman,"

I didn't think you were Spanish. I just thought you were illiterate. □

KREW-CUTS

By Frank Krewda

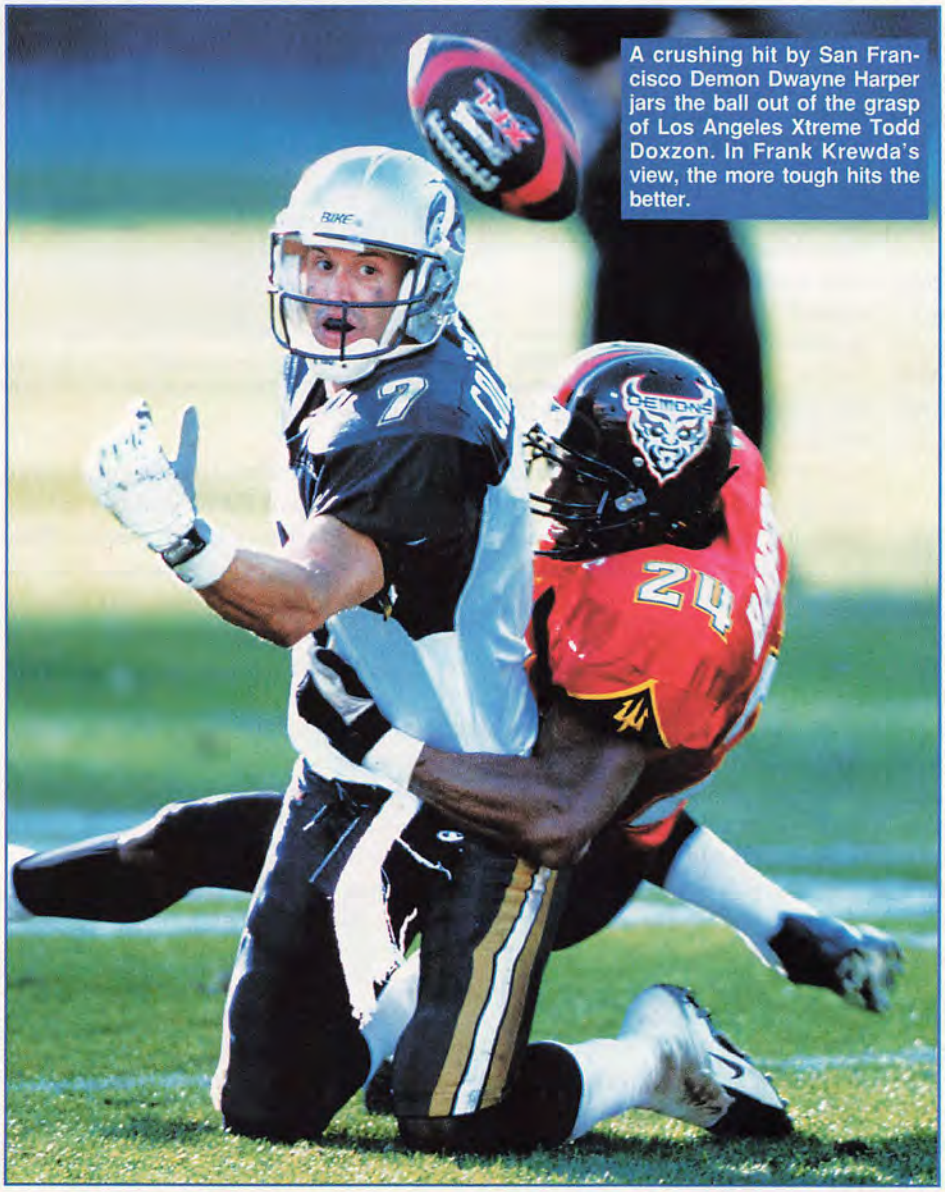
Xtreme viewpoint. Ever since Vince McMahon announced the formation of the XFL last February, people have been after me for my opinion. At various points, friends, wrestling fans, even other media types have asked me how I thought the new league would fare. But rather than spit out some off-the-cuff theory on why the XFL would sink or swim, I decided to reserve my judgment until I actually watched a game or two.

Well, after seeing two games, all I can say is, somebody call a lifeguard. And this is coming from someone who'd love to see the XFL steal the No Fun League's thunder. Unfortunately, just catching lightning in a bottle will be a stretch for these guys.

But before I tell you what's wrong with the XFL, let me mention the positives as I saw them:

1. The style of play. If you like bone-crunching hits (legal or otherwise), this league's for you. There's no league-wide mandate to protect the quarterback or wide receivers, so you'll enjoy watching the so-called skill players get their brains knocked into next week without all the yellow flags.

2. The atmosphere. Unless Vinnie Mac had the crowd noise piped into the various arenas, the fans in attendance seemed like they were very pumped up to be there. Sparse, tepid crowds could have sabotaged the TV presentation. Thank goodness the fans were loud—very loud. At least during the first week.



A crushing hit by San Francisco Demon Dwayne Harper jars the ball out of the grasp of Los Angeles Xtreme Todd Doxzon. In Frank Krewda's view, the more tough hits the better.

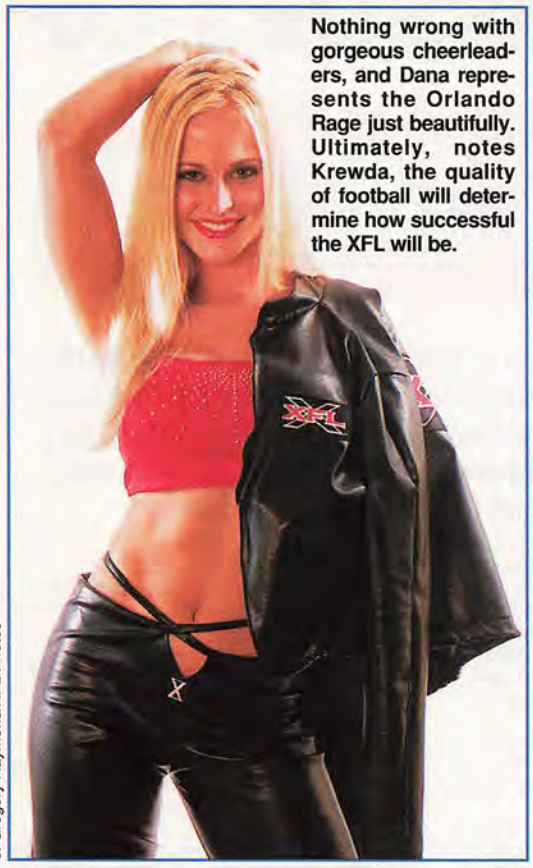
J. Gregory Raymond/XFL Photos

3. The cheerleaders. Hey, you'll never hear me complain about sideline cameramen inventing angles from which to shoot the XFL cheerleaders. In fact, the more creative—and invasive—the better.

None of these positives, however, will ever outweigh the negatives, no matter how the WWF spins it. And the negatives, as I saw them over the inaugural weekend, were pretty big:

1. The lack of talent. Not since my fifth-grade CYO season have I seen so many underthrown passes and blown assignments. True, the league is built on second-rate talent, and the players had only played together for a few weeks, so nobody was expecting the '85 Bears out there. However, the play was so poor, Vince might have to strip the cheerleaders bare to keep viewers watching if the quality of football doesn't improve quickly. People simply won't pay or tune in to watch mistakes.

2. The athletes. The XFL went to great lengths to hype up



Nothing wrong with gorgeous cheerleaders, and Dana represents the Orlando Rage just beautifully. Ultimately, notes Krewda, the quality of football will determine how successful the XFL will be.

J. Gregory Raymond/XFL Photos

its sideline interviews and unprecedented camera access. Apparently, the players and coaches weren't in on the plan. Most came off as bothered or uninterested in talking live after a crucial play. Those who were willing to cooperate provided little more than the usual trash talk and cliches. If this league hopes to make good on its promise of more excitement, the coaches and players will have to show considerably more passion—even if their interviews must be scripted.

Unfortunately, that will reflect poorly on whatever integrity the XFL claims to have.

3. The XFL's weakest team is in its biggest market. I'd only seen four of the league's eight teams play at the time I sat down to write this, but it's hard to imagine that any squad could be worse than the New York/New Jersey Hitmen. And even though the XFL has teams in Los Angeles and Chicago, New York is its hub. If the people there have nothing to get juiced about, how can Vince build enthusiasm for the league in any other city?

4. The wrestling association. J.R. and Jerry Lawler calling games? "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin, The Rock, and The Undertaker making inaugural speeches? Sure, we didn't expect McMahon to abandon the WWF as a marketing tool for the XFL, but having his wrestlers and announcers actually participate in league affairs is a great way to fuel skepticism among the naysayers. The more the WWF gets involved, the less credible the XFL will be. Then it's just a matter of time before people start questioning the integrity of the contests.

That's why—even though the XFL is presented as sports entertainment (albeit *unscripted* sports entertainment)—the life of the league comes down to what happens on the field. If Vince gave the league a year or two to let the teams gel and develop continuity, we'd be watching a much more substantial product.

But the XFL is not rooted in good football or the quality of its athletes—it's rooted in the current wrestling craze, in that WWF "Attitude." That's why getting the XFL up and running while the WWFE coffers were full and the world was still in love with the WWF's style was so important.

What Vince failed to realize was that people can watch *Raw Is War* or *Smackdown* to see that style. When it comes to football, America wants substance over style every time.

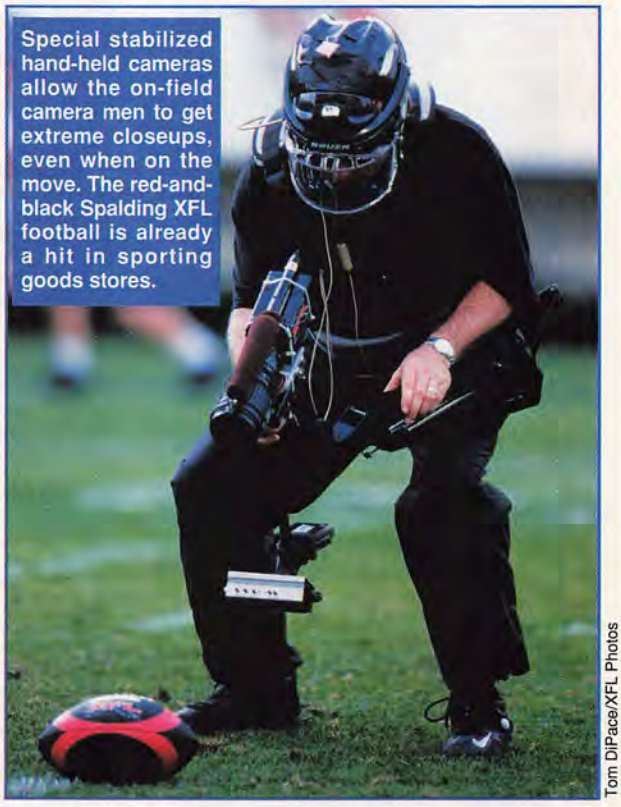
Tasteless angles. Now back to wrestling. Every time you think that our sport has crossed over to respectability, some company steps up to the plate with a totally tasteless storyline. The Chyna injury angle from this past winter was one of the worst I've ever seen.

After the Owen Hart and Darren Drosdov tragedies, I just can't understand how the WWF followed through on a program that suggested Chyna's career was in jeopardy due to some tragic injury that no one bought into from the start.

The suggestion that she was paralyzed—even for a second—and having Jerry Lawler break his "King" persona like he did when Owen plunged to his death was a slap in Martha Hart's face. Why couldn't the WWF have just come clean and told people that Chyna needed time off to promote her book?

The only storyline that even came close to that farce was the stunt Buff Bagwell and Lex Luger pulled on the January 29 *Nitro* in Baltimore when they made light of Ray Lewis' legal problems during a promo.

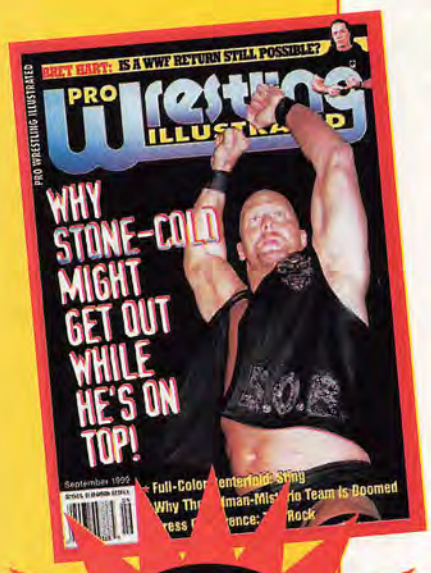
Regardless of your feelings on Lewis or the case, it should never be forgotten that two people lost their lives. I'd think that alone would have eliminated the subject as promo material. Obviously the geniuses at WCW didn't see it that way. □



Special stabilized hand-held cameras allow the on-field camera men to get extreme closeups, even when on the move. The red-and-black Spalding XFL football is already a hit in sporting goods stores.

Tom DiPace/XFL Photos

BACK ISSUES OF PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED®


BRET HART: IS A WWF RETURN STILL POSSIBLE?
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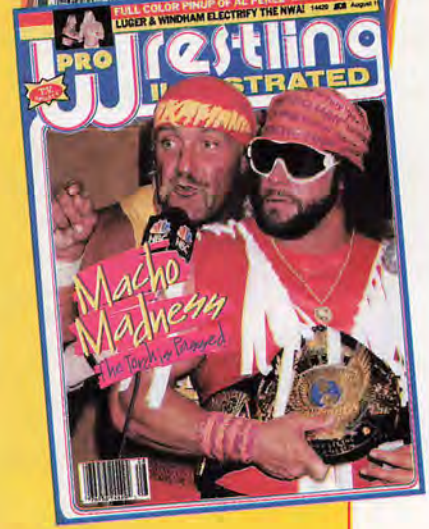
WHY STONE-COLD MIGHT GET OUT WHILE HE'S ON TOP!
September 1999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February 1991: WrestleMania VII Contest. Centerfold: 1991 calendar. Plus: Sid Vicious, DiBiase-Rhodes, Scott Steiner, Power & Glory, Terry Funk.

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April 1996: WCW World Title Turmoil. Centerfold: The Kid. Plus: Hulk Hogan, Ahmed Johnson, Bob Armstrong, Michaels-Bret, Public Enemy.

May 1996: Un-Natural! The WWF Has Finally Gone Too Far! Centerfold: Public Enemy. Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Dreamer-Raven, Dan Severn, Ric Flair, Giant.

October 1996: Peaking Too Soon: Will The Giant Be Ruined By His Own Success? Centerfold: Goldust. Plus: Big Van Vader, Ric Flair, Bulldog, Lex Luger.

Winter 1996 (Special Issue): *PWI* 500. Centerfold: Shawn Michaels.

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October 1998: Bret Screws Bret, Part II. Centerfold: Hunter Hearst Helmsley. Plus: Jim Ross, Marcus Bagwell, WWF controversy, FBI.

December 1998: Gold Rush! Get Ready For The Most Awesome WCW Title Reign Ever! Centerfold: Undertaker. Plus: The Giant, Vader, Guerreros, Ken Shamrock.

Holiday 1998 (100-Page Special Issue): *PWI* 500. Eighth Annual Special.

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July 1999: Warning! This Team Will Self-Destruct In 15 Seconds! Centerfold: X-Pac. Plus: New Jack-Dudleys, Jesse James, Venis & Godfather, Sting-Bischoff-Flair.

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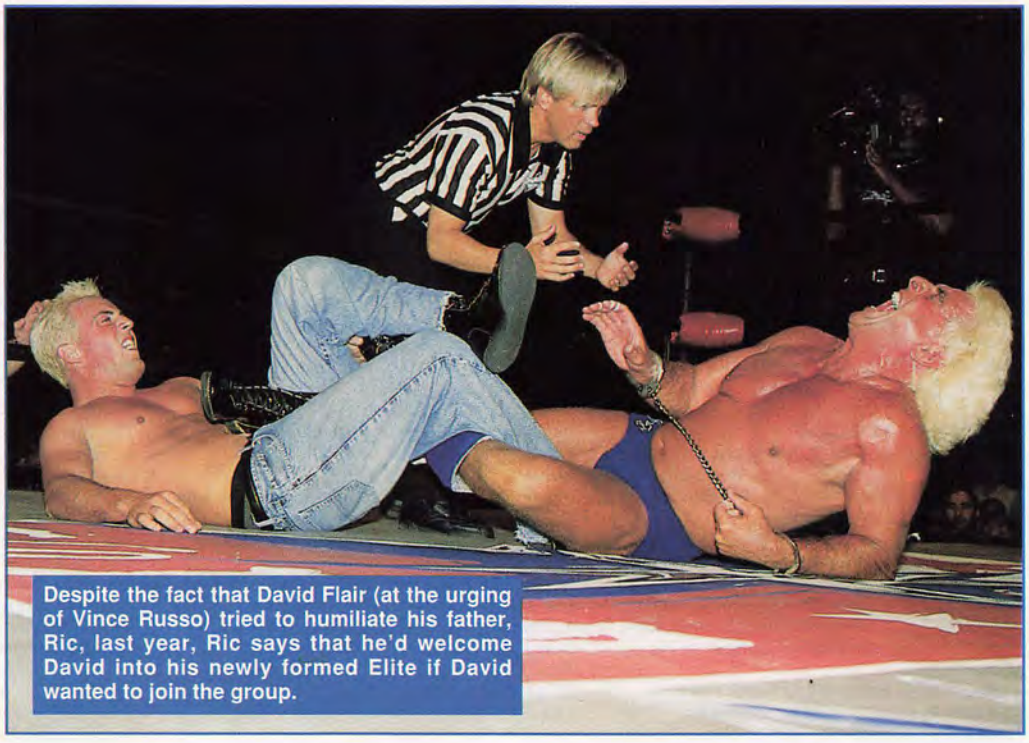


Despite the fact that David Flair (at the urging of Vince Russo) tried to humiliate his father, Ric, last year, Ric says that he'd welcome David into his newly formed Elite if David wanted to join the group.

RIC FLAIR

HOW MANY MORE times will the wrestling world allow itself to be swerved by Ric Flair? For the past few months, Flair had us convinced that his days as a heel were a thing of the past and that he was sincere in his desire to rehabilitate WCW as acting CEO. But at the Sin pay-per-view, the dirtiest player in the game showed us all that he hasn't changed.

In the weeks leading up to the show, Flair seemed intent on destroying Scott Steiner psychologically. He announced a four-way main event for the pay-per-view, pitting Steiner against Sid Vicious, Jeff Jarrett, and a mystery opponent. Then Flair drilled at Steiner's psyche by having the mystery opponent appear on every edition of ***Nitro*** *and* ***Thunder*** *leading up to the event. There were even rumors that the mystery man would be Rick Steiner.*

It appeared as if all Steiner's bravado had goaded Flair into stacking the deck against "Big Poppa Pump." Surely Steiner couldn't walk out of that four-way with the WCW World title belt around his waist.

But he did. And as it turns out, Flair had ***us*** *swerved all along. The mystery opponent wasn't Rick Steiner. It was Road Warrior Animal. And Animal wasn't there to help dismantle Steiner; he was there to help him.*

The night after Sin, Flair announced he had enlisted an elite group of wrestlers to help him control WCW. Buff Bagwell and Lex Luger made the rounds, recruiting new wrestlers to join The Elite, as Flair initially called the clique. Jarrett and Animal were also on board. So was Steiner. Within a day's time, Flair had positioned himself to be the mastermind of the latest NWO-style invasion of WCW.

The "Nature Boy" agreed to sit down with Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker and Senior Writers Dave Rosenbaum and Dan Murphy to discuss his role in ushering in yet another new era in WCW. Flair was in high spirits ... at first.

DAVE ROSENBAUM: I have to hand it to you, Ric. The new year is only a few weeks old and you've managed to dispose of Bill Goldberg, recruit Animal of all people to be your bodyguard, and get on the good side of Scott Steiner, which is no easy accomplishment. All that and you haven't been institutionalized or stripped to your underwear in the middle of the ring. Not a bad 2001 for the "Nature Boy" so far.

RIC FLAIR: Oh, "Diamond" Davey Rosenbaum! Brother, we go back, what, 15 years now? You gotta know you can't get under my skin that easy. I could walk out of here right now and you $20,000-a-year-earning hacks would have to settle for a "Press Conference" with Alex Wright.

> **"Me against Scott Steiner? You might as well ask if a Great White could beat a pack of hungry lions. We're two different species, and the match will never happen, so I guess we'll never know the answer."**

DAVE LENKER: You mean the number-one contender for the World title?

FLAIR: Even "Big Poppa Pump" deserves an easy day at the office once in a while, Lenker. I named Wright top contender based on his strong showing on WCW's recent tour of Germany. Hey, I don't want to be known as a guy who holds back the youngsters. But since Nash apparently has The Cat in his back pocket, he managed to get the title shot. I guess Scotty Steiner will just run his ass out of WCW sooner rather than later.

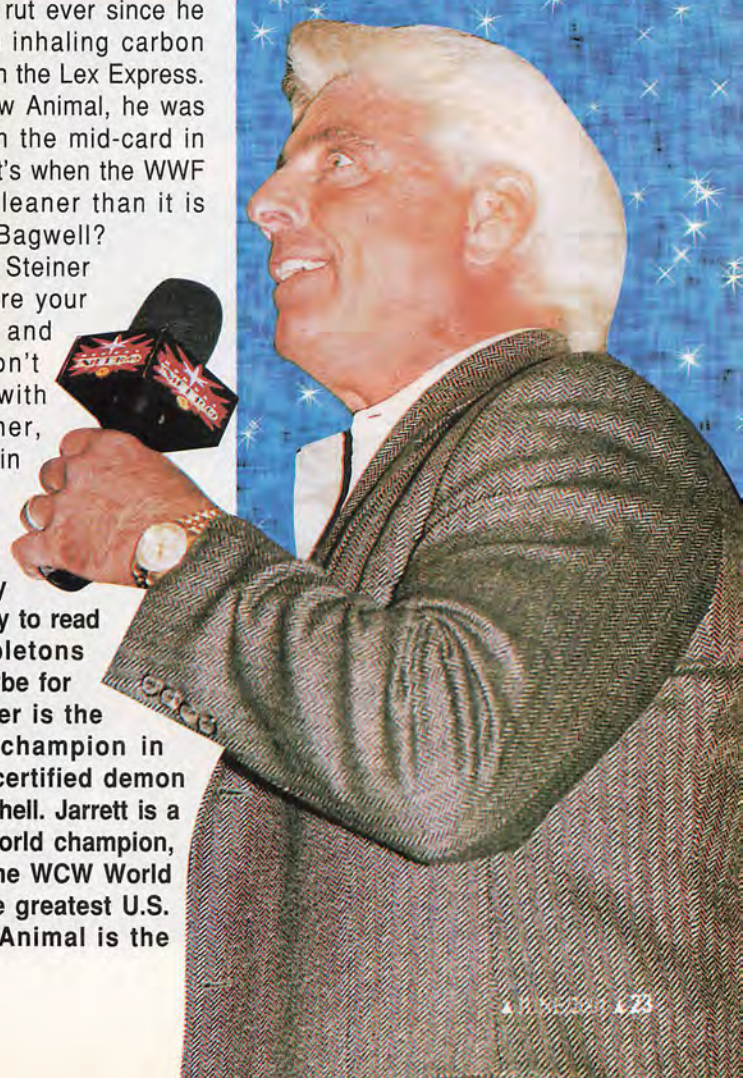
DAN MURPHY: Ric, WCW is a mess right now. There are alliances all over the place, and they're getting broken all the time. Can you tell me what exactly you're trying to accomplish with this Elite group?

FLAIR: The Murph! Danny, my boy, I'd love to tell you, but the fact of the matter is that the level of dominance my boys are going to attain has never been reached by any other stable. Not the NWO. Maybe not even The Four Horsemen. Brother, we're going to be bigger, better, and badder than anyone else in wrestling history, and you can take that to the bank. *Whoooooo!*

ROSENBAUM: Come on, Ric! Lex Luger's been in a rut ever since he spent that spring inhaling carbon monoxide fumes on the Lex Express. The last time I saw Animal, he was struggling through the mid-card in the WWF, and that's when the WWF roster was a lot leaner than it is today. And Buff Bagwell? The way I see it, Steiner and Jeff Jarrett are your only real guns, and they really don't match up well with Nash, Rick Steiner, and Dallas Page in my book.

FLAIR: It always astounds me that people pay hard-earned money to read what you simpletons think. Except maybe for me, Scotty Steiner is the most dominant champion in WCW history, a certified demon from the gates of hell. Jarrett is a four-time WCW World champion, Luger is a two-time WCW World champion and the greatest U.S. champion ever, Animal is the

Every issue, reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport.



greatest tag team wrestler to ever lace up the boots, and Buff has the most potential I've ever seen in a youngster.

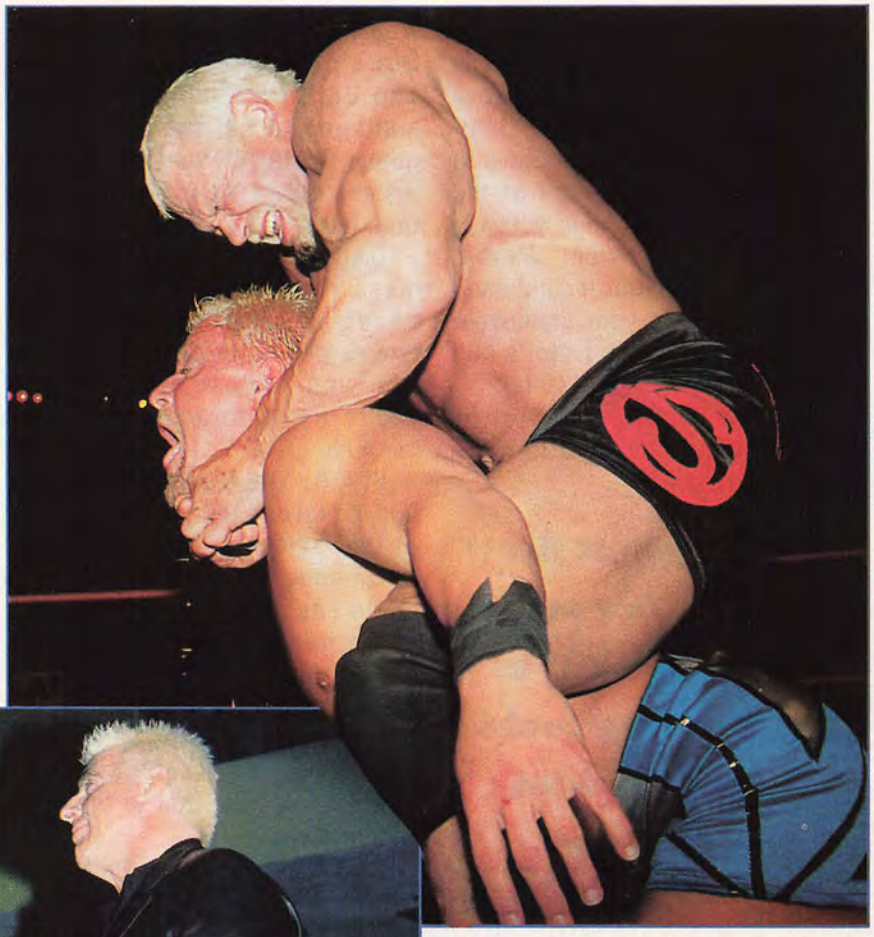
MURPHY: I would buy a used car from you, Ric. What do you think, Lenker?

LENKER: I'm still waiting to see how he's going to make Mike Sanders the next dirtiest player in the game.

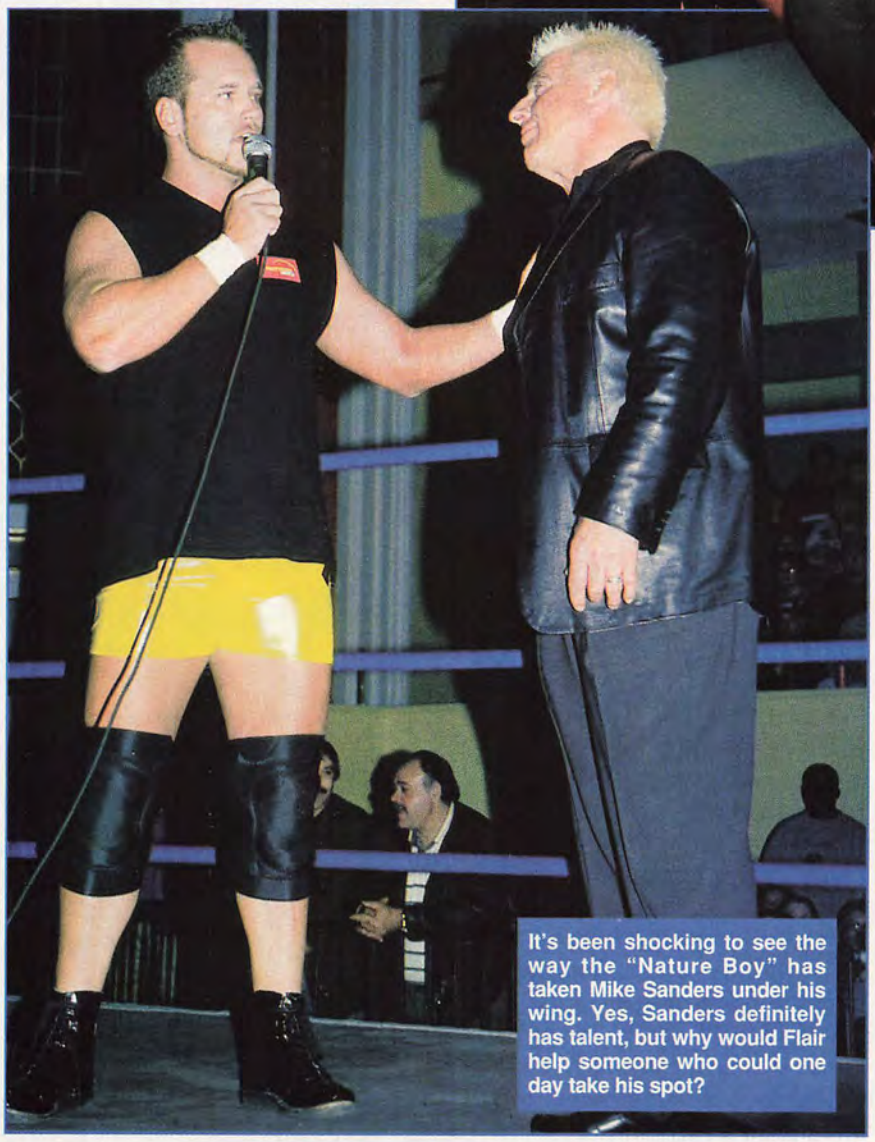
ROSENBAUM: I think he may have been referring to Sanders' personal hygiene habits, Dave.

FLAIR: Hey, what's wrong with Sanders? The kid's got some spunk, some verve. He's an achiever, which is something everyone in this room other than myself obviously is not.

MURPHY: Achieve this, Ric.



Given the nature of the egos involved in Flair's Elite, it's hard to say if the group will last. WCW World champ Scott Steiner and Jeff Jarrett are just two of the members who have clashed in the past.



It's been shocking to see the way the "Nature Boy" has taken Mike Sanders under his wing. Yes, Sanders definitely has talent, but why would Flair help someone who could one day take his spot?

FLAIR: Murph, you're a character, my friend. An absolute laugh riot. We've got to do this more often. I love chatting with you guys, the wrestling media. You know what's best for everyone. Me? I'm just the greatest wrestler of all-time. What do I know, right?

ROSENBAUM: Next question. You called Steiner the "most dominant champion in WCW history." Who would win if Ric Flair and Scott Steiner went head-to-head for the World title in their prime?

FLAIR: Me against Scott Steiner? You might as well ask if a Great White could beat a pack of hungry lions. We're two different species, and the match will never happen, so I guess we'll never know the answer, and I don't care.

ROSENBAUM: In 1996, the

NWO managed to come in and just take WCW over. I'd say they just beat out the Horsemen as the most successful group ever in wrestling.

FLAIR: Like I said, I can't understand why anybody cares what Dave Rosenbaum thinks or says.

ROSENBAUM: Anyway, the NWO ended up self-destructing after it admitted, well, just about anybody who wanted in.

LENKER: Except The Nasty Boys.

ROSENBAUM: Oh yeah, forgot about them. Bagwell and Luger already approached a bunch of guys in a recruiting effort. Aren't you concerned that you're repeating the mistakes that killed the NWO?

MURPHY: For example, would The Elite admit David Flair?

FLAIR: You'd better believe that anyone who we invite to join our ranks will be deserving of the honor. I'm leading the most incredible coalition of athletes ever assembled, and we're going to do whatever we want to do, no matter what you or anyone else says.

MURPHY: You're avoiding the question. Would you admit your son to your little group?

FLAIR: David is a former World tag team and U.S. champion and would certainly be welcomed with open arms if he expressed interest in joining the newest dynasty in WCW. And, Murph, I think you'd better learn to have a little respect when you're talking about my son. David could break you in half, and Lord knows he's not above doing it.

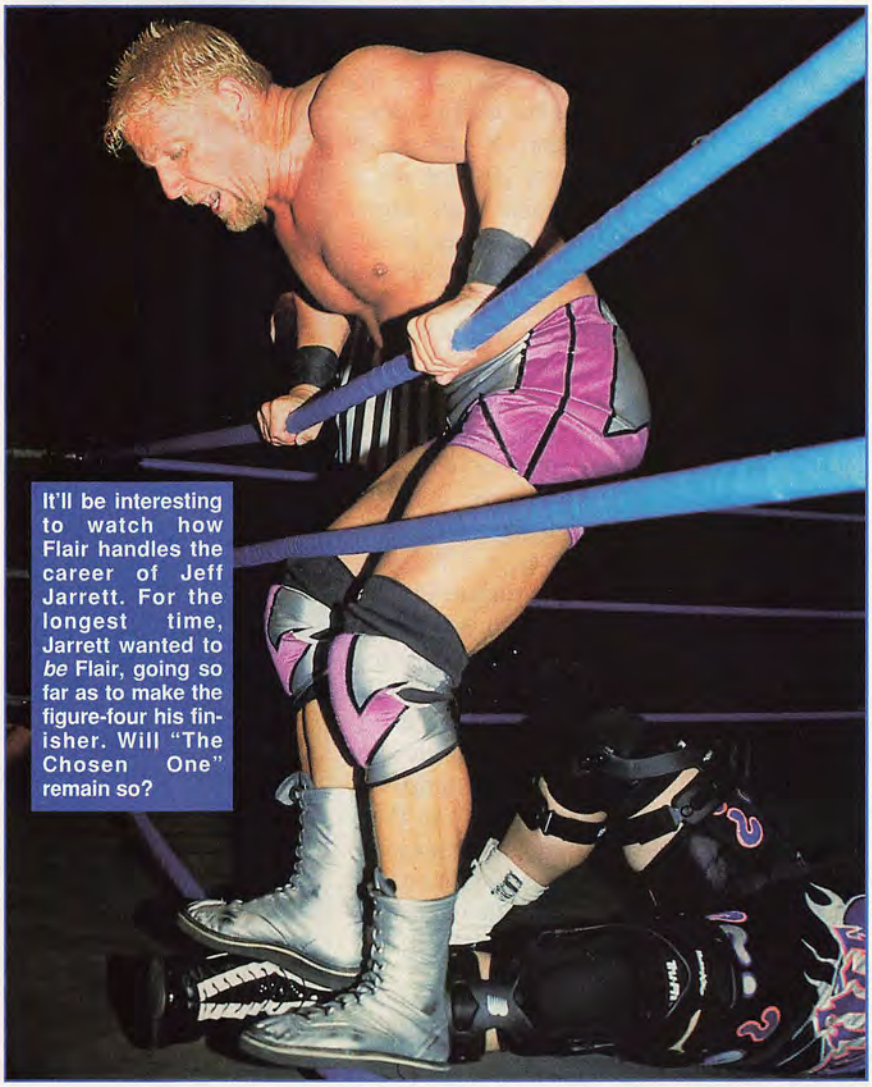
MURPHY: I've got $100 that says David couldn't break Tygress in half!

ROSENBAUM: I'll go in on that.

LENKER: Hey, settle down, guys. Veins are popping out on Ric's forehead.

FLAIR: ***(Furiously)*** **I've had enough of this! Get your laughs now, because The Elite will be laughing for years to come. This interview is over!** □

Buff Bagwell and Lex Luger, collectively known as Totally Buff, always seem to add a few laughs to an Elite segment. With Flair's guidance, the tandem should secure the World tag team title in the near future.



It'll be interesting to watch how Flair handles the career of Jeff Jarrett. For the longest time, Jarrett wanted to *be* Flair, going so far as to make the figure-four his finisher. Will "The Chosen One" remain so?

THE 2001

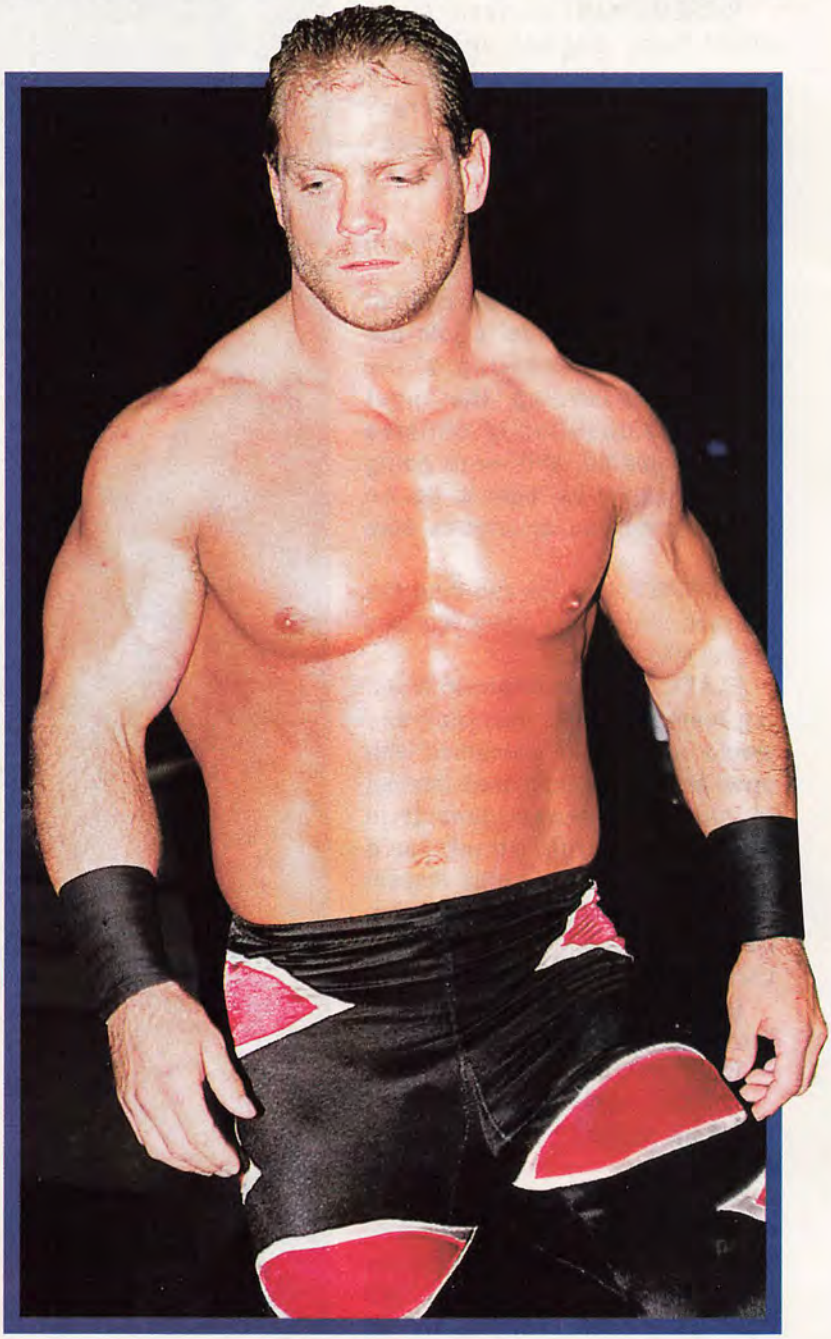
WRESTLING'S 50 HOTTEST

THE *"PWI* POLL" is wrestling's most exclusive survey. It is an analysis of wrestling from the inside, by which wrestlers, matchmakers, referees, broadcasters, journalists, and photographers gauge their own profession.

In December, *PWI* sent 190 ballots to a cross-section of "in-the-know" people. Some of the 50 questions were multiple choice, while others were fill-in-the-blank. For the first time, the majority of ballots—70 percent—were sent via e-mail. That proved to very efficient and a vast improvement over previous years. More than 90 percent of ballots were returned to our offices by the January 26 deadline, an all-time record. Respondents were encouraged to make comments in the allotted spaces.

Part I of our poll is comprised of 40 questions that ask about the general state of affairs in pro wrestling. Part II, titled "Best Of The Best," focuses on the core of the sport, the effectiveness of particular holds and maneuvers. The actual sport of wrestling changes almost as much as the wrestlers themselves.

The poll results provide tremendous insight. Chris Benoit, despite his failure to capture the WWF World title, maintained his position as the Best Pound-For-Pound Wrestler. Consider this question: If you could watch the matches of only one wrestler, whom would you choose? Yoshihiro Tajiri, a relative newcomer, surpassed stellar wrestlers like Benoit and Rob Van Dam to earn the top spot in this important category. That's high praise for Tajiri, since that overwhelming response came from the industry's insiders—the people who know wrestling best.



Once again, "Canadian Crippler" Chris Benoit was well regarded by the *"PWI* Poll" panelists. According to our experts, nobody is better than Benoit on a pound-for-pound basis.

PWI POLL

QUESTIONS ANSWERED!

The Rock and Steve Austin maintained their great popularity. The Rock, for the second consecutive year, is the Sexiest Male Wrestler. Austin, despite his long convalescence in 2000, wasn't forgotten. He achieved high rankings in numerous categories. Likewise, Jim Ross increased his lead as Best TV Commentator.

WCW's fall from influence was well-documented in last year's poll, and the 2001 poll doesn't reflect much change. Bill Goldberg's stock has dropped substantially, and neither Hulk Hogan nor Ric Flair was anywhere to be found in our polling responses. The WWF dominated in terms of positive responses. However, a large percentage of respondents thought *Raw's* ratings lead over *Nitro* would diminish significantly over the next year.

Enthusiasm for ECW has waned severely. Rumors concerning ECW's impending demise brought down the numbers of almost every ECW personality, including Rob Van Dam and Joey Styles. Tajiri was the one exception.

Most respondents thought the general public's perception of wrestling remained "mediocre," while the mainstream media's coverage of the business was upgraded to "good." Insiders believed WWFE stock prices would remain approximately the same. The fact that most respondents thought wrestling's immediate future would remain "status quo" seemed to indicate the industry is in for another relatively strong year.

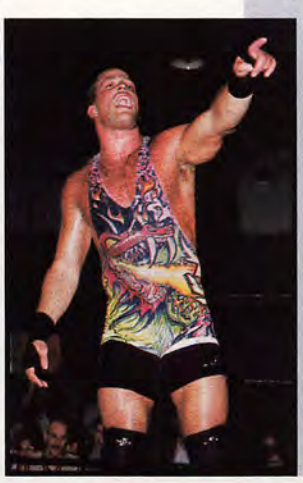
Read over this year's *"PWI* Poll" and see if you agree with the results. After all, the fans have the most impact on the direction of the business. Insiders can only predict where *you* are going to take it.

Bill Goldberg had a subpar year by most industry insiders' expectations—and that was reflected in the 2001 *"PWI* Poll." But insiders still want to see a Goldberg-Steve Austin matchup somewhere down the line.

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Benoit wins two years in a row

When Chris Benoit won this category last year, we noted that his size had prevented him from beating Sid Vicious for the WCW World title. But within weeks of the issuing of last year's poll, Benoit succeeded in defeating Vicious for that very title at Souled Out. While that reign lasted only a day because of his jump to the WWF, Benoit has won several Intercontinental titles since that time, and almost won the WWF World title in July 2000 and September 2000. Olympic gold medalist Kurt Angle, who became the World champion during his first year with the WWF, was a shoo-in for second place. Rob Van Dam's failure to win the ECW World title, coupled with a rather inactive year, bumped him down to third place. Jeff Hardy maintained his relatively high percentage of votes, although a split with brother Matt could help him next year. Lance Storm and Yoshihiro Tajiri were among the new vote-getters, while WCW World champion Scott Steiner earned three percent. The fact that Steiner possesses such great size and power probably prevented him from ranking higher in a category that tends to favor smaller wrestlers.



RVD took too much time off

Team Canada leader

Chris Benoit	*23%*
Kurt Angle	*21%*
Rob Van Dam	*15%*
Jeff Hardy	*14%*
Lance Storm	*5%*
Yoshihiro Tajiri	*4%*
Scott Steiner	*3%*
Others	*15%*

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Hardcore daredevil

One-half of an exciting tandem

Yoshihiro Tajiri	*21%*
Chris Benoit	*14%*
Triple-H	*13%*
The Hardy Boyz	*11%*
Rob Van Dam	*11%*
Scott Steiner	*7%*
The Rock	*6%*
Others	*17%*

Considering the fact that he's only an ECW mid-carder and hasn't even wrestled in a pay-per-view main event, Yoshihiro Tajiri's ascension in this category is quite astonishing. Many respondents noted that his blend of martial arts and hardcore weaponry make for the industry's most fascinating wrestling style. For the second year in a row, Chris Benoit placed second in this category. "Benoit has so much intensity that it's important to watch every second of his matches," noted one respondent. Triple-H's string of successful WWF title defenses last year—which included a street-fight against Cactus Jack, a "Hell In A Cell" match against Cactus Jack, and the fatal four-way at WrestleMania—enhanced his reputation as a big-time player. Helmsley tends to bring out the best and worst emotions in his opponents. The Hardy Boyz continued to astound and amaze, and Rob Van Dam was hurt by a lack of in-ring activity. Scott Steiner and The Rock both make their debuts with respectable vote percentages.

3. WOULD YOU JUDGE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Status quo	*38%*
Cloudy	*22%*
Promising	*20%*
Shining	*20%*
Hopeless	*0%*

The only major change this year is that the "cloudy" forecast surpassed that of "promising." Respondents mentioned the WWF's slight drop in ratings, WCW's inability to recover, and ECW's downfall. Others took a downright fatalistic approach, citing the cyclical nature of the business. "Things have been going too well," said one observer. "It's about time the trend reverses." Optimists mentioned that *Raw* continues to be the highest-rated program on cable, and that *Nitro* is showing slight improvement. Again this year, however, most fans responded that wrestling's immediate future will remain "status quo." Wrestling is now the bedrock of American cable television, and its international appeal grows every year. According to one insider, "Whether it's an up-cycle or a down-cycle, there's no danger of wrestling ever going away."

4. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?

For the first time in a while, the voting for Wrestling's Sexiest Woman was very close. Last year, Torrie Wilson—who didn't even rank in this year's poll—had double that of her runner-up, Kimberly, who isn't ranked in this year's poll either. The year before that, Sable squashed Tammy Lynn Sytch by 10 percentage points. In this year's poll, Major Gunns just edged out Trish Stratus by one percentage point. This result seems to suggest that WCW underutilized Gunns by sticking her with a mid-card group like Team Canada. Despite her lack of TV time, Stacy Keibler surprisingly came in third with 16 percent of the vote. Respondents who voted for Lita cited her tomboy appeal—as well as her protruding thongs.

Major Gunns	*30%*
Trish Stratus	*29%*
Stacy Keibler	*16%*
Lita	*7%*
Francine	*6%*
Chyna	*4%*
Terri	*4%*
Dawn Marie	*2%*
Others	*2%*

Ohhhhhh, Canada!

What a sexy runner-up

5. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST MAN?

Boy, does WCW ever need some help in this category. While female WWF fans squeal for The Rock, Jeff Hardy, Edge, Triple-H, Chris Jericho, and Christian, their WCW counterparts are seemingly left with scant few choices, as only Booker T and Bryan Clark made this year's cut. The Rock increased his standing as Wrestling's Sexiest Man by two percentage points while Edge leapfrogged Jericho in the findings. Most of the respondents voting for Hardy cited the "teenybopper crowd," and those voting for Triple-H used adjectives such as "rough," "rugged," and "dangerous." Some notable casualties since last year's poll: Buff Bagwell, Test, Bret Hart, Val Venis, Bill Goldberg, and Sting.

The Rock	*34%*
Jeff Hardy	*19%*
Edge	*13%*
Triple-H	*12%*
Chris Jericho	*12%*
Christian	*4%*
Booker T	*3%*
Shane Helms	*1%*
Bryan Clark	*1%*
Others	*1%*

6. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST TV COMMENTATOR?

Jim Ross	*45%*
Jerry Lawler	*24%*
Joey Styles	*10%*
Michael Cole	*9%*
Tony Schiavone	*5%*
Tazz	*4%*
Cyrus	*1%*
Scott Hudson	*1%*
Others	*1%*

Respect for Jim Ross grows within the industry each year. This is the third consecutive year in which Ross has earned the top honor. He earned 32 percent in 1999 and garnered 34 percent in 2000. This year, his 45 percent is an all-time high. Jerry Lawler has improved steadily over the years and earned 24 percent in 2001, with most respondents citing his consistency in entertaining viewers. ECW's travails have sunk the numbers of its lead announcer, Joey Styles, who dropped to 10 percent this year. Michael Cole, thanks to his exposure on *Smackdown,* jumped to fourth place. One respondent mentioned his "invisible quality" and stated that his announcing style "enhances the action in a subtle, yet informative manner." Schiavone-haters forced "T-Bone" down further to five percent. Those same voters turned against Mike Tenay even more viciously, eliminating him from the running altogether. Surprisingly, Tenay garnered 30 percent of the vote in 1999.

J.R.: Tellin' it like it is

Cyrus: PPV superstar

7. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Good	*33%*
Mediocre	*30%*
Excellent	*23%*
Poor	*14%*

Just as insiders had given up on fair coverage of pro wrestling, mainstream media coverage appears to have turned a corner. For the first time in the history of the *"PWI* Poll," mainstream coverage earned a "good" rating, with 33 percent. Although 30 percent of respondents said coverage was mediocre, an additional 23 percent rated coverage as "excellent." The "poor" classification was at an all-time low of 14 percent. "As the industry opens up to the public, everybody gets better educated about wrestling," said one respondent. Numerous documentaries—including *Beyond The Mat*—did a solid job of illuminating the business for outsiders, discarding a lot of myths. The WWF going public and Vince McMahon's startup of the XFL educated many mainstream journalists, who finally knew what they were talking about—sort of.

8. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Mediocre	*30%*
Good	*27%*
Poor	*24%*
Excellent	*19%*

According to our respondents, the general public's perception of wrestling has improved somewhat since last year. In last year's poll, there was still the specter of Owen Hart's death, in addition to lawsuits by Rena Mero and Nicole Bass. The overall negative percentage (mediocre and poor combined) was 59 percent last year. That figure dropped slightly to 54 percent in this year's poll. All in all, the consensus remained that the general public's perception was mediocre. This wasn't because of any specific tragedy or scandal, but because people finally began to realize that wrestling has evolved since the mid-1980s. The general public finally realized what regular fans have known for a while: Wrestling has become lewd and crude. The PTC's campaign against the WWF hasn't helped matters.

9. WHICH IS THE BEST WEEKLY WRESTLING SHOW ON TV?

Raw's margin over its primary rival, *Nitro,* spread to 32 percentage points this year. Just as gratifying to the WWF is that its other two-hour show, *Smackdown,* also edged out WCW's flagship program. These numbers reflect the Monday night war between the WWF and WCW: *Raw* nearly doubles (and has at times tripled) *Nitro's* overall rating. The lack of success for *Sunday Night Heat's* move to MTV and WWF New York indicates there isn't much enthusiasm for programs that stray too far from the established formula.

Raw	*52%*
Smackdown	*31%*
Nitro	*10%*
Sunday Night Heat	*4%*
Thunder	*2%*
Others	*1%*

10. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?

For the first few years of the *"PWI* Poll" this question really asked respondents to compare the Space Age with the Stone Age. But, as of this year, the question takes on some significance. Five years ago puts wrestling in 1995 and early-1996. The Monday night war had begun on Labor Day 1995, and WCW had overtaken the WWF in the ratings for the first time. The necessary ingredients for today's boom period, however, were put in place. Suddenly, there was real competition among the major leagues, and one star after another defected from the WWF to WCW. The NWO and "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin phenomena weren't far away. It will be interesting to see if these "better" or "worse" numbers flip-flop next year.

Better	*79%*
Worse	*21%*

Can Paul E.'s revolution last?

11. WILL ECW SURVIVE ANOTHER YEAR?

Although ECW's financial problems have always been an issue, they became a major story in late-2000 and early-2001. Following ECW's cancellation from TNN, the extreme federation failed to negotiate another cable deal that would enable it to regain its fiscal footing. Speculation that ECW would jump to USA Network, Fox's FX, or ESPN2 was premature. As of press time, ECW officials were reportedly considering offers from outsiders looking to buy the company. Surprisingly, 41 percent of respondents have grown accustomed to Paul Heyman's remarkable ability to keep ECW going and believe he will wave his magic wand again. It must be noted, however, that most of those who responded "yes" believe ECW will operate at a much smaller capacity, comparable to the old Tri-State Wrestling of nearly a decade ago. The majority of respondents, 59 percent, think ECW will be completely gone by the end of the year.

No	*59%*
Yes	*41%*

12. HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE ERIC BISCHOFF TO MAKE WCW A SERIOUS RIVAL TO THE WWF AGAIN?

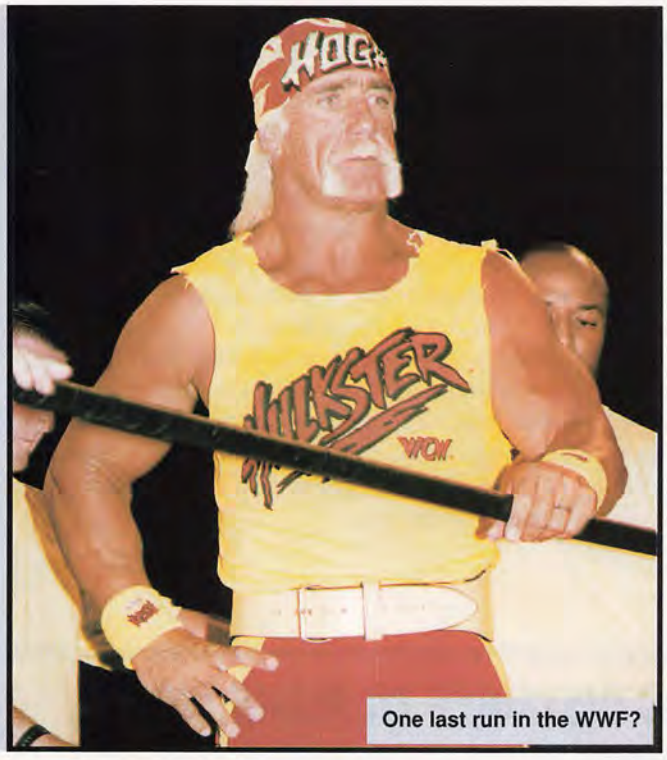
Twenty-nine percent of respondents believe Eric Bischoff has the ability to make WCW a serious rival to the WWF—within one to three years. Nearly as many, 27 percent, think Bischoff cannot beat the WWF twice in one lifetime. One respondent who thought it would take three to five years for WCW to rebuild commented, "Not only do I not think Bischoff is the man to do it, but I don't see WCW's new parent company tolerating failure for three to five years, and definitely not five to 10 years. If WCW lasts three to five years, they could possibly make it. But in this economy, I don't see a struggling company—even one with the exposure of WCW—staying in business if it's losing money."

1 to 3 years	*29%*
Never	*27%*
3 to 5 years	*22%*
5 to 10 years	*16%*
There now	*6%*

13. WHERE WILL HULK HOGAN FINISH HIS CAREER?

WWF *52%*
WCW *48%*

Hulk Hogan's WCW contract expires this spring, and the speculation has already begun: Will Hogan jump to the WWF? A few months ago, Vince McMahon stated that it wouldn't be "mutually beneficial" for Hogan to make the jump. But the landscape could change just before WrestleMania (if McMahon decides to hotshot the main event), or after WrestleMania (if McMahon decides the WWF needs a dramatic storyline shift). Fifty-two percent of respondents think Hogan would prefer to end his career where "Hulkamania" began. Forty-eight percent of respondents don't think Hogan is a risk-taker anymore, and some suggest the return of Eric Bischoff to WCW would benefit Hogan during contract renegotiations with that promotion.



One last run in the WWF?

14. IS SHAWN MICHAELS MAKING A WISE MOVE BY ATTEMPTING A COMEBACK?

No *55%*
Yes *45%*

While most respondents believed the return of a healthy Shawn Michaels would be great for wrestling, 55 percent didn't think he was in any condition to make a comeback. "I'd love to see HBK back in the ring, but I don't want to see someone with a physical handicap hurt himself for the sake of entertaining people," said one respondent. Others were more critical, calling Michaels greedy. "When Shawn gave an interview to *PWI* last year, he said he didn't want to return unless he's 100 percent," said another insider. "And if he's saying he's 100 percent, he's probably being a tad dishonest. Money, though, will do that to almost any man." Those favoring a Michaels comeback often cited the careers of Steve Austin and Mick Foley, both of whom continued to compete despite doctors' advice against it. Some of the 45 percent who said "yes" did so with one caveat: that Michaels make a one-night-only appearance at WrestleMania XVII and retire again. He's *not* planning on doing that.

The majority believes HBK should stay retired

15. WILL THE XFL HURT OR HELP THE WWF?

Help *57%*
Hurt *43%*

Fifty-seven percent of respondents said Vince McMahon's bold move to create the XFL will help the WWF in the long run. Some of them cited WWFE's assertion that the XFL will turn a profit in its first season, and others noted that it was a good decision for McMahon to diversify his empire. Critics recalled McMahon's startup failures outside of wrestling, including the World Bodybuilding Federation and boxing pay-per-views. Other critics thought too much WWF revenue was going to the XFL and that WWFE stock options simply gave wrestlers their own money the long way around.

16. WHAT WWF-WCW DREAM MATCH WOULD DRAW THE MOST INTEREST FROM FANS?

Steve Austin vs. Bill Goldberg *51%*
Triple-H vs. Bill Goldberg *37%*
The Rock vs. Scott Steiner *4%*
Others *8%*

The image of Steve Austin and Bill Goldberg staring each other down graced the cover of *Inside Wrestling*, just to name one publication, more than two years ago. Although the Goldberg phenomenon may be waning, more than half of the respondents still want to see the dream match that has been touted for so long. Thirty-seven percent, citing the confrontation between Goldberg and Triple-H at a convention last year, believe that nothing would match the intensity between those two. A prospective showdown between The Rock and WCW World champion Scott Steiner, which hasn't really been contemplated before, earned just four percent.

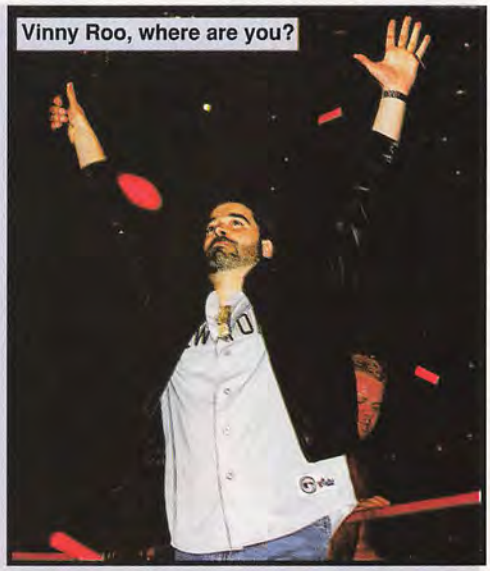
17. WILL THE ROCK STILL BE IN WRESTLING FIVE YEARS FROM NOW?

Yes..... *56%*
No..... *44%*

The next logical question is this: If The Rock isn't in wrestling, where will he be? Most respondents, for the purposes of this question, assumed The Rock would be in Hollywood if he weren't in the ring. "The Rock once said, in one of your magazines, that nothing can substitute the rush of a live crowd," recalled one insider. "His ego needs that boost a few times a week. Besides, wrestling was in his blood even before he turned pro." Of course, the attraction to Hollywood might be stronger if his father and grandfather were Clint Eastwood and John Wayne rather than Rocky Johnson and Peter Maivia. One particular respondent wasn't so certain about The Rock's commitment to wrestling: "The Rock has classic leading man potential, and I don't see any anybody—whether he's a wrestler or not—passing up the opportunity to be a major box office draw."

Can Rock resist Hollywood?

18. WILL VINCE RUSSO EVER WORK IN WRESTLING AGAIN?


Vinny Roo, where are you?

No *71%*
Yes..... *29%*

Everyone knows the old Hollywood phrase, "You'll never work in this town again!" The same sentiment can be paraphrased concerning Vince Russo's relationship to wrestling. Russo defected from the WWF to WCW and was hailed as the genius behind Vince McMahon's winning "Attitude" formula, as well as the savior for Ted Turner's struggling wrestling company. Not only did Russo fail to save Turner's company, but his weak performance in WCW also led some to believe he had the benefit of a very good editor during his time in the WWF, probably Vince McMahon. "Russo tried to take wrestling and transform it into something else," commented one respondent. "He tried to make it a male soap opera. Well, wrestling fans don't want too much soap opera crap, especially soap opera crap that doesn't make sense. He will never work in wrestling again, and he can give up on Hollywood, too."

19. HOW MUCH OF AN IMPACT HAS THE PTC HAD ON THE WWF?

Significant impact	*40%*
Tremendous impact	*31%*
Minimal impact	*25%*
No impact	*4%*

Most agreed that the Parents Television Council played an important role in changing the WWF's product over the past year. Several sponsors pulled their commercials from WWF programming, and the federation has cleaned up its act a bit since the PTC's letter-writing campaign to advertisers. Some of those who said the PTC had significant or tremendous impact actually thought the impact was positive for the WWF. The pressure forced the WWF to tone down its lurid sexual overtones and gratuitous violence, which, from a public relations standpoint, was a good development. The sentiment among those who asserted the PTC had minimal or no impact cited examples from recent editions of *Raw* and *Smackdown*, including scantily clad females and bloody sneak-attacks.

20. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Lance Storm	*24%*
Yoshihiro Tajiri	*22%*
C.W. Anderson	*21%*
Jerry Lynn	*15%*
William Regal	*12%*
Crowbar	*3%*
Raven	*2%*
Others	*1%*

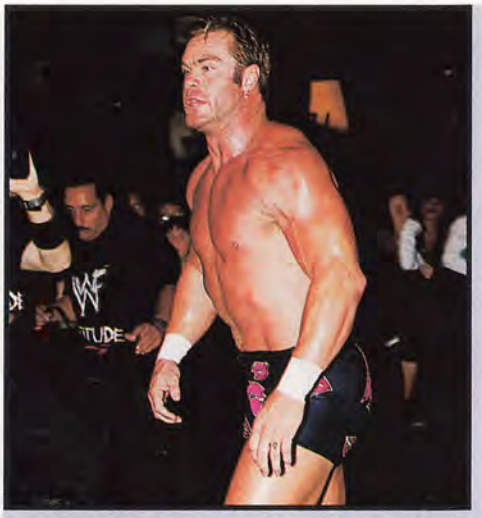
Storm's unappreciated, too

How is it possible for a man to hold the WCW U.S., cruiserweight, and hardcore championships simultaneously, yet still be considered an underrated wrestler? The answer isn't clear, but WCW bookers appear to be underrating Storm by not giving him a main-event push. That was the conclusion of 24 percent of respondents, although nearly as many respondents thought Yoshihiro Tajiri, C.W. Anderson, or Jerry Lynn was underrated. ECW stars placed strongly in this category, primarily because many of their supporters believe *all* ECW stars are underrated. William Regal is still considered an overlooked gem by some respondents. Similar comments were made about Crowbar and Raven, whose scientific skills are overshadowed by their hardcore styles.

21. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Billy Gunn	*21%*
Kevin Nash	*17%*
Buff Bagwell	*13%*
Sting	*12%*
Steve Austin	*12%*
Chyna	*9%*
The Sandman	*7%*
Kane	*3%*
Steve Corino	*3%*
Others	*3%*

Most of these overrated wrestlers have something in common: They have benefited from tremendous hype from their respective federations, but have shown meager results. Billy Gunn is one of the few King of the Ring winners to continue wallowing in the mid-card rather than graduate to the top tier. It isn't as if the WWF hasn't been trying. "The One," "Billy G," "Mr. Ass," DeGeneration X, The New Age Outlaws, and even The Smokin' Gunns have been honest attempts to package Gunn effectively. He has never made it big on his own, though. Last year's winner of this dubious category, Kevin Nash, turned in a consistently overrated performance with 17 percent.


"The One" has dethroned "Big Sexy"

22. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?

Steve Austin was omitted from last year's rankings, due to his disabled status in early-2000. It's hard to think of someone's brawling ability when he's wearing a neck brace. He roared back this year with 26 percent of the vote. ECW Unified champion Rhino muscled his way into second place, pushing Haku—last year's top placer—down to 17 percent. Perennial tough guys such as The Undertaker, The Sandman, The Acolytes, and WWF hardcore champion Raven also placed in the 2001 poll. Kronic isn't a complete surprise, either, although Crowbar's one percent showing was unexpected. The former WCW hardcore champ's supporters cited his rare ability to combine the scientific and hardcore styles into an effective offense.

Steve Austin	*26%*
Rhino	*19%*
Haku	*17%*
The Undertaker	*12%*
The Sandman	*9%*
The Acolytes	*8%*
Raven	*4%*
Kronic	*3%*
Crowbar	*1%*
Others	*1%*

Austin's even a better brawler than Kane

23. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTERVIEWS?

Triple-H: best with the stick

Triple-H	*18%*
Scott Steiner	*17%*
The Rock	*15%*
Steve Austin	*13%*
Vince McMahon	*11%*
Kurt Angle	*10%*
Christian & Edge	*9%*
Mike Sanders	*3%*
Lance Storm	*2%*
Others	*2%*

There are so many big mouths in wrestling that it's hard to pick just one. Triple-H just barely slid by Scott Steiner with 18 percent of the vote to Steiner's 17 percent. Their interview styles couldn't be more different. Triple-H gives solid, reasoned arguments for everything he does, which advances storylines quite nicely. The WCW champ's promos consist of illogical, guttural language and unauthorized comments. But those comments cause controversy, which is the main purpose of a promo. The Rock, last year's winner in this category, scored 15 percent. Again this year, critics charged him with being a bit too predictable. Kurt Angle, Christian, and Edge delivered humorous promos without foul language. Mike Sanders did a better-than-expected job as spokesman for The Natural Born Thrillers, while Lance Storm's promos as leader of Team Canada were underrated.

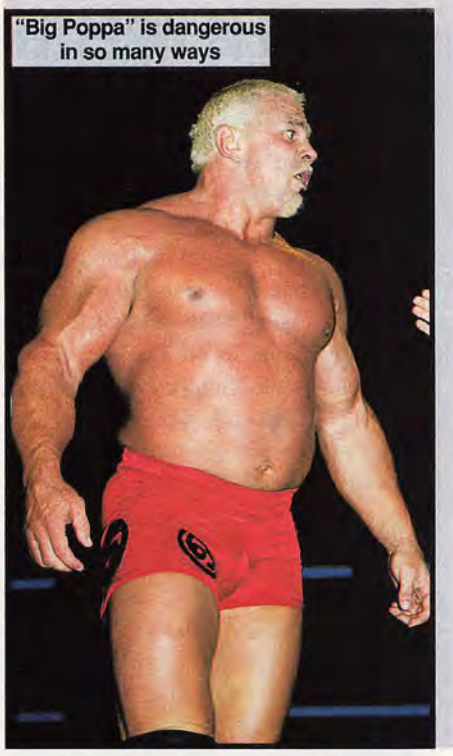
24. WOULD ECW BE BETTER OFF IF IT HAD NEVER ACCEPTED THE TNN DEAL?

No	*61%*
Yes	*39%*

After a promising start on The Nashville Network, Paul Heyman began lodging numerous complaints against network executives. He complained that *ECW On TNN* didn't receive enough promotion throughout the week, that TNN censors imposed standards that were too strict, and that TNN exploited ECW for the sole purpose of helping the rest of its Friday night "Thrill Zone" lineup, including *Motor Madness* and *Rollerjam*. The kiss of death was Viacom's signing of the WWF to TNN, which effectively terminated its tumultuous relationship with ECW. Although TNN caused ECW some problems, most respondents agreed that ECW's downfall was mainly its own doing.

25. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?

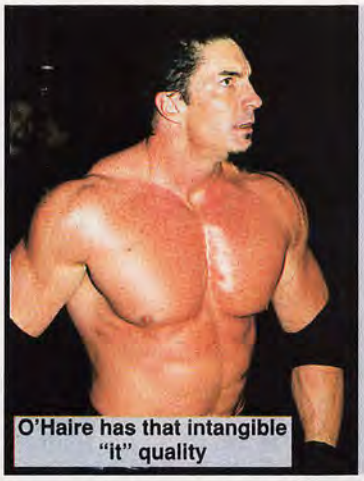
Scott Steiner	*30%*
Steve Austin	*24%*
Rhino	*21%*
Chris Benoit	*10%*
The Undertaker	*7%*
Chris Jericho	*3%*
Others	*5%*


"Big Poppa" is dangerous in so many ways

The only thing more dangerous than Scott Steiner's mouth is Scott Steiner's uncontrollable temper. Steiner was involved in a road rage incident in 1998 involving a Georgia State Department of Transportation worker, and recently got into a backstage brawl with Dallas Page. The trouble with Steiner is that he doesn't use curse words or make threatening gestures merely for entertainment purposes; he's a man who is genuinely out of control. Steve Austin, who placed second, has a reputation for backing up every threat he makes—no matter how outlandish it is. ECW Unified champion Rhino gored several victims on his way to the top, including The Sandman and his wife! Chris Jericho made a surprising showing, although many of the respondents quipped that he is unintentionally dangerous in the ring on occasion.

26. WHO IS WRESTLING'S MOST PROMISING NEW STAR?

Sean O'Haire	*18%*
Mark Jindrak	*15%*
Trish Stratus	*15%*
Mike Sanders	*14%*
K-Kwik	*12%*
The Haas brothers	*6%*
Stacy Keibler	*6%*
Shelton Benjamin	*1%*
Others	*13%*


O'Haire has that intangible "it" quality

The big news here is The Natural Born Thrillers made a very strong impact in this category. The 18 percentage points earned by the top vote-getter, Sean O'Haire, may not be that impressive, but consider the cumulative percentage of votes earned by O'Haire, Mark Jindrak, and Mike Sanders: a whopping 47 percent. The only star who came close is Trish Stratus, who isn't considered world-championship material by any stretch of the imagination. K-Kwik, because of his impressive stint as K-Krush in Memphis and subsequent WWF debut, is considered a future star. Russ and Charlie Haas are standouts on the Northeast independent circuit with excellent collegiate backgrounds. They recently signed developmental deals with the WWF. Stacy Keibler may have rated higher if she had been on TV during the polling period. Shelton Benjamin, an Ohio Valley competitor who should make it to the WWF soon, earned one percent. The percentage of votes for others, 13 percent, was abnormally high because of a large number of votes for various indy prospects.

27. AT PRESS TIME, WWFE STOCK WAS SELLING AT $20.45 PER SHARE. WHERE DO YOU SEE WWFE STOCK A YEAR FROM NOW?

About the same	*40%*
Double	*21%*
Half what is now	*20%*
Less than half	*10%*
Triple	*9%*

Let's hope the respondents who said WWFE stock would remain "about the same" in last year's poll are investors in the market. They've proven to have savvy business acumens. WWFE stock has jumped about $6 per share since this time in 2000, but it has been an up-and-down year. It reached $20 in the spring before lower-than-expected earnings forced the stock down to $14. Higher ticket prices and great pay-per-view buy rates, along with a promising outlook for the XFL, helped drive the price back up to $20 in January of this year. By any interpretation, the WWFE stock forecast is neutral. Even the *"PWI* Poll" stats reflect very little change.

28. WHO WAS THE WWF MVP OF 2000?

Triple-H reigned as WWF World champion more days than anyone in 2000, including The Rock and Kurt Angle. His top ranking in the *"PWI* 500" reflected his banner year and the respect he had gained among his peers. The Rock, *PWI's* Wrestler of the Year for 2000, became the WWF's key franchise, filling the void Steve Austin left behind during his long rehabilitation. Vince McMahon dropped out of the spotlight occasionally, but always reinvigorated the WWF upon his return. Kurt Angle, who was voted Most Hated Wrestler and Rookie of the Year, captured the World, Intercontinental, and European titles in addition to his King of the Ring victory. Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley was almost as formidable as her father, manipulating events to benefit the McMahon-Helmsley Faction. Jim Ross received credit for his day-in, day-out consistency of quality play-by-play.

Triple-H	*26%*
The Rock	*22%*
Vince McMahon	*21%*
Kurt Angle	*19%*
Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley	*4%*
Jim Ross	*3%*
Others	*5%*

An MVP with criminal intent

29. WHO WAS THE WCW MVP OF 2000?

Scott Steiner	*43%*
Booker T	*33%*
Jeff Jarrett	*23%*
Others	*1%*

WCW executives should be worried about the lack of most valuable players cited in this year's poll. The WWF has twice as many certifiable MVPs. Scott Steiner, Booker T, and Jeff Jarrett are great wrestlers and possess entertaining personalities, but three men cannot carry an entire company. "Scott Steiner is in the spot that Bill Goldberg was going to have," said one respondent. "But Goldberg proved that he isn't ready yet, or at least the company isn't capable of promoting him correctly. Steiner proved he was ready for the task, though—and WCW was ready for him." Booker T added desperately needed credibility to the WCW World title, which had been tainted by David Arquette and Vince Russo. Jeff Jarrett, meanwhile, was consistent throughout the year, capable of delivering solid main events every time. Bill Goldberg, Ric Flair, Sting, and Hulk Hogan were notably absent from our poll results.

30. WHO WAS THE ECW MVP OF 2000?

Paul Heyman	*56%*
Tommy Dreamer	*16%*
The Sandman	*9%*
Justin Credible	*8%*
Steve Corino	*7%*
Others	*4%*

Heyman's MVP: Most Valuable Promoter?

While it seems strange to see an ECW MVP list without Rob Van Dam or Sabu, the rest of the roster was left with the challenge of filling the void during their hiatuses and departures—and Paul Heyman was left to construct entertaining storylines without their services, which is why he garnered a strong 56 percent of the vote. Tommy Dreamer came in second with 16 percent, with most voters citing his calming influence on an otherwise hectic locker room. Because of his overall popularity, The Sandman placed a respectable third. Justin Credible helped re-establish the importance of the World title after Mike Awesome defected to WCW. Steve Corino proved to be an effective World champ. There were also a few tongue-in-cheek votes for Vince McMahon, who, short of allowing Paul E. to take over the WWF's *Raw* timeslot on TNN, has done everything in his power to help ECW survive.

31. SHOULD BACKYARD WRESTLING BE OUTLAWED?

Yes	*81%*
No	*19%*

It's a story that has been replayed several times on local newscasts and network magazine shows over the past year. How does a community balance the freedom of citizens against the right of individuals to risk their own well-being, especially if those individuals are under the age of 18? In several cases, parents have faced criminal charges for allowing their children to participate in backyard wrestling events. In other cases, kids have suffered severe injuries due to backyard wrestling activities. "These kids don't learn the safety measures wrestlers take when using those moves," said one respondent. "I know how to take a DDT. Unfortunately, these kids playing in the backyard don't." Others polled don't see the harm. "I don't think it's fair to pick on backyard wrestlers when they aren't harming anyone else in the neighborhood," said one respondent. "It's especially not fair if the kids have permission from their parents."

32. WHO DO YOU THINK WILL BE NUMBER ONE IN NEXT YEAR'S *"PWI* 500"?

The Rock, who has never been ranked number one in the *"PWI* 500," was the favorite as of early-2001. Most respondents feel he has greater momentum than former arch-rival Triple-H and, in terms of championship victories, will probably outperform Steve Austin, who has a penchant for getting involved in time-wasting feuds. WCW World champion Scott Steiner could finally reach number one after 14 years in the business—if his reign of terror continues. Although WWF World champion Kurt Angle is coming off a remarkable year, the consensus is that the Olympian has too many enemies and too few allies to repeat his past success. Triple-H, the number-one man in 2000, seems to be too bogged down in his feud with Austin for another championship run. It must be noted that Triple-H earned a meager three percent in last year's poll. He will no doubt try to prove his critics wrong again this year. Bill Goldberg, who placed first in last year's poll, is lumped in with the "Others" this time around.

Rock wants that top spot from Triple-H

The Rock	*27%*
Scott Steiner	*21%*
Kurt Angle	*20%*
Steve Austin	*13%*
Triple-H	*9%*
Chris Benoit	*6%*
Others	*4%*

33. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT THE MONDAY NIGHT RATINGS GAP TO BE A YEAR FROM NOW?

On the surface, these appear to be very good numbers for WCW. An amazing 75 percent of respondents believed the Monday night ratings gap between *Raw* and *Nitro* would become either significantly or slightly smaller. But the results weren't that amazing after reading various commentaries appearing on the ballots. "I don't think the gap will become larger because I don't think *Raw* is going to do much better than it is now, and *Nitro* won't get any worse." Not exactly a glowing endorsement. Another respondent said this: "There is no way the gap could become significantly larger. I think *Raw* has already hit its all-time high, and *Nitro* would have to do negative numbers for the gap to increase. I don't think even WCW is capable of that."

Significantly smaller	*39%*
Slightly smaller	*36%*
Slightly larger	*15%*
Significantly larger	*10%*

34. WOULD WCW BE WISE TO TONE DOWN SEX AND BAD LANGUAGE?

Yes *58%*
No *42%*

When the WWF launched its "Attitude" campaign four years ago, relying on sexual situations and foul language to shock viewers, Eric Bischoff said that was the surest way to drive away advertisers. The PTC's campaign proved Bischoff correct. Since Russo upped the sex and bad language in WCW and couldn't increase ratings, Bischoff has said he will turn back the clock to a more family-friendly era. Is this a smart move? Fifty-eight percent of respondents think it is. "The word 'ass' has been overused so much that it doesn't have the impact it once did," suggested one respondent. "And do we need to see another match with Scott Hall and Kevin Nash wrestling a couple of busty, oversexed chicks? I don't think so." Most insiders agreed that creativity—and not cursing—will be the key to WCW's comeback.

35. WILL SCOTT HALL EVER WORK IN A MAJOR PROMOTION AGAIN?

No *52%*
Yes *48%*

Many respondents believed ECW was Scott Hall's last big chance for a comeback, but with ECW in decline, the Outsider has little hope of rekindling his flagging career. "The last thing Bischoff wants to do is handcuff himself again by caving in to Hall and Nash, so I don't think WCW will touch him," said one insider. "Likewise, Vince McMahon is too smart a businessman to waste money or energy on a wrestler like Hall. He might have a lot more to offer this business, but his track record over the past year has destroyed what was left of his reputation." The minority holding the opposite view stated, "Anything is possible in wrestling" and "Hall has a cult following that can't be ignored." Undoubtedly, Hall hopes those sentiments are true.

Odds of a Hall comeback are about 50/50

36. WHICH WAS THE BEST WWF PAY-PER-VIEW OF 2000?

HHH locks up Rock at Judgment Day

There was no single breakout WWF pay-per-view in 2000. Instead, the parity among the various PPV choices and the "Others" category indicates there was something about each event that appealed to someone. Judgment Day, which barely came out on top, featured the unforgettable "Ironman" match in which Triple-H regained the WWF World title from The Rock. Only the goofup by special referee Shawn Michaels at the conclusion of the bout prevented this PPV from winning by a larger margin. The Royal Rumble and No Way Out featured main events in which WWF champ Triple-H defeated Cactus Jack. Fully Loaded is credited with elevating Chris Benoit, Chris Jericho, and Kurt Angle in a triple main event. WrestleMania, which garnered 53 percent last year, was deemed nothin' special in 2000. The fatal four-way took valuable participants from the mid-card and watered down the main event. Besides, there's nothing fun about a heel like Triple-H winning at 'Mania.

Judgment Day *22%*
Royal Rumble *21%*
No Way Out *19%*
Fully Loaded *13%*
WrestleMania 2000 ..... *9%*
SummerSlam *6%*
Others *10%*

37. WHICH WAS THE BEST WCW PAY-PER-VIEW OF 2000?

Booker leapfrogs Jarrett at Bash at the Beach

Bash at the Beach	*26%*
Mayhem	*17%*
Spring Stampede	*16%*
New Blood Rising	*15%*
Starrcade	*14%*
Fall Brawl	*6%*
Others	*6%*

Vince Russo would enjoy taking credit for the success of Bash at the Beach, pontificating on how it was a well-planned and well-executed pay-per-view thanks to his genius. But it wasn't intrigue or suspense that made Bash at the Beach the most memorable WCW PPV of the year. It was Russo's decision to publicly berate Hulk Hogan that made BATB memorable. WCW champ Jeff Jarrett laid down for Hulk Hogan, Russo ripped on Hogan with a profanity-laced tirade, and Hogan stormed out of the building. Booker T captured the World title in a hastily arranged bout against Jarrett. Scott Steiner's World title victory over Booker made Mayhem a strong pay-per-view, and who can forget Russo and Eric Bischoff's new beginning at Spring Stampede? The real new beginning took place at New Blood Rising, where Booker retained the World title against Jarrett. The Starrcade main event, pitting WCW World champion Scott Steiner against Sid Vicious, lacked any momentum or real human interest. That's likely why Starrcade earned only 14 percent of the tally.

38. WHICH WAS THE BEST ECW PAY-PER-VIEW OF 2000?

Anarchy Rulz	*40%*
Guilty as Charged	*29%*
November to Remember	*19%*
Hardcore Heaven	*8%*
Living Dangerously	*2%*
Massacre on 34th Street	*2%*

Unlike the rest of the Big Three, ECW had a clear-cut pay-per-view winner this year: Anarchy Rulz. The same event earned the top spot last year, thanks to its main event featuring Mike Awesome's World title victory over Masato Tanaka and defending champ Tazz. This year's PPV had the same drama, as hometown boy Jerry Lynn defeated Justin Credible in St. Paul, Minnesota. Awesome's successful World title defense against Spike Dudley, in addition to a solid undercard, helped Guilty as Charged earn second place. Steve Corino, who captured the World title in a "Double Jeopardy" match, will definitely remember November.

39. WHO IS THE BEST MEXICAN WRESTLER?

Mexico's finest

For two years in a row now, no Luchadore has commanded the attention that Super Crazy has, at least not in our poll. In the last year, Crazy returned to his native Mexico, where he dazzled AAA crowds with his wild high-flying style, but his presence stateside was sorely missed for most of the year (he eventually did work out his visa problems, allowing him to return to ECW). When our insiders think of the fast-paced, high-risk style that's so pervasive in Lucha Libre, the man who comes to mind more than any other is Crazy. Rey Misterio Jr. hardly seems like a classic Luchadore anymore, but his continued success and popularity in WCW is hard to question. Note the strong showing this year for two legends, Atlantis and El Hijo del Santo, both of whom have enjoyed star status for more than 15 years. If he continues to improve in the next 12 months at the same rate he did during the last 12, expect Ricky Marvin to make a bigger splash in this category next year.

Super Crazy	*30%*
Rey Misterio Jr.	*21%*
El Hijo del Santo	*13%*
Atlantis	*10%*
Ricky Marvin	*9%*
Dr. Wagner Jr.	*8%*
Others	*9%*

40. WHO IS THE BEST JAPANESE WRESTLER?

Jun Akiyama	*24%*
Toshiaki Kawada	*20%*
Yoshihiro Tajiri	*19%*
Kensuke Sasaki	*12%*
Shiima Nobunaga	*6%*
Others	*19%*

Perennial winner Mitsuharu Misawa, hampered by injuries all year, dropped off the list completely in this year's balloting; the same can be said of another Pro Wrestling NOAH star, Kenta Kobashi, whose bad knees might force him into retirement. In a close vote, NOAH superstar Jun Akiyama edged out All-Japan's Toshiaki Kawada by a mere four percent, though the voting was very spread out. Not far behind Kawada was ECW's Tajiri, along with Kensuke Sasaki, who, as top dog of New Japan, had a breakout year. He proved his dominance as IWGP champion. While Tajiri doesn't see much competition in the Land of the Rising Sun, his undeniable skill and prowess caught the attention of our experts in this and several other categories. Surprising support for Toryumon wrestler Shiima Nobunaga, who impressed at last year's J-Cup.

41. WHICH IS THE BEST TOP-ROPE MANEUVER?

Rob Van Dam's Van Terminator	*33%*
Dragon Kid's Dragonrana	*19%*
Jeff Hardy's swanton	*15%*
Mike Awesome's Awesome bomb	*12%*
Christopher Daniels' floating moonsault	*7%*
Lita's swinging huracanrana	*6%*
Others	*8%*

As spectacular and breathtaking as it is dangerous, the Van Terminator, Rob Van Dam's new springboard dropkick finisher, wins with a comfortable margin here. The Dragonrana, though, is no less stunning; it has earned Dragon Kid a measure of respect among fellow high-flyers and our experts as well. It would be impossible to overlook Jeff Hardy's success in the last year, much of which can be attributed to his trademark move, the swanton, a graceful invention of The Great Sasuke. Hardy is so closely associated with the move that many mistakenly think of him as the originator. Decent support for some other moves, including the now rarely seen top-rope Awesome bomb.

42. WHICH IS THE BEST POWER BOMB VARIATION?

Career-killing gimmicks can't kill the popularity of this killer move—the Awesome bomb remains our panelists' top pick for the second year in a row. Mike Awesome's career may have stalled in WCW, but his signature move remains a formidable and dangerous finisher. "You forget how dangerous the guy can be with just that one move when you see him in these silly gimmicks," said one respondent. The last ride, of course, is The Undertaker's scary-looking elevated power bomb, and though it was only introduced about halfway through 2000, it got strong support. Surprisingly high marks for ECW's Swinger's release orange bomb, a brainbuster-turned-throwing power bomb that is as devastating as it is unusual. Another new entry is the spider bomb, a twisting version of the Liger bomb that's been helping Kaz Hayashi chalk up key wins.

Mike Awesome's Awesome bomb	*26%*
Undertaker's last ride	*20%*
Swinger's release orange bomb	*13%*
Tatsuhito Takaiwa's triple bomb	*11%*
Kaz Hayashi's spider bomb	*9%*
Others	*21%*

An awesome Awesome bomb

43. WHAT IS THE BEST PILEDRIVER VARIATION?

Given his meteoric rise through the ranks of pro wrestling, it's easy to understand why people are watching ECW Unified champion Rhino. Many of our insiders think that his piledriver variation is the best in the business, and we're certainly not going to tell *him* otherwise. For the first year, respondents included Triple-H's pedigree as a piledriver variation, and the former WWF champion's pet move came through with a very strong showing. In previous years, men like Kane and The Undertaker scored well in this category, but the only tombstone of note this year is Justin Credible's "That's Incredible," as the move has been eliminated from many wrestlers' repertoires. Jerry Lynn's Gotch-style cradle piledriver also earned a respectable portion of the votes; Lynn's finisher is a move rarely seen in the United States.

Rhino's second turnbuckle piledriver	*25%*
Triple-H's pedigree	*22%*
Justin Credible's "That's Incredible"	*21%*
Jerry Lynn's cradle piledriver	*17%*
Dr. Wagner Jr.'s Michinoku driver II	*11%*
Others	*4%*

Rhino's dangerous from the second turnbuckle

44. WHAT IS THE BEST SUPLEX VARIATION?

Although men like Rick Steiner and The Barbarian have used it with success in the past, the belly-to-belly superplex that won Kurt Angle the King of the Ring tournament topped this list for the first time in the history of our survey. Executed just like a standard belly-to-belly, the superplex variation, as the name implies, is performed off the top rope, which makes it all the more devastating. Our respondents were so impressed with this move that the runners-up were left well behind. The Rock's Rock bottom has proven to be a simple but effective finisher for the people's champ. Our experts obviously felt Booker T's uranage (Book-end) was a rather poor imitation. Top Japanese star Jun Akiyama continues to win support for his crushing exploder suplex, and technical wizard Chris Benoit's rolling German suplex did not get overlooked, either.

Kurt Angle's belly-to-belly superplex	*34%*
The Rock's Rock bottom	*20%*
Jun Akiyama's exploder suplex	*18%*
Chris Benoit's rolling German suplex	*14%*
Booker T's uranage suplex	*4%*
Others	*10%*

45. WHAT IS THE BEST OFFENSIVE STRIKE?

The first year for this new category saw the closest voting of any question, with many different strikes receiving just a single vote. A strike, simply put, is an offensive blow, and since we have a separate category specifically for kicks, we asked our panel not to include those here. All-Japan Triple Crown champion Genichiro Tenryu won top honors by a narrow margin for his hard, violent chops, although Chris Benoit was only a handful of votes away with his own chops. Mitsuharu Misawa possesses such an effective elbow strike that he's been using it as a finisher for years, and that fact alone was likely what put it in contention for the top spot. Like Misawa, Jushin Liger uses his favorite strike, the palm blow (a single open-handed blast to the face), to finish off foes.

Genichiro Tenryu's chops	*18%*
Mitsuharu Misawa's elbow strikes	*17%*
Chris Benoit's chops	*16%*
Jushin Liger's palm strikes	*14%*
William Regal's European uppercuts	*13%*
Others	*22%*

46. WHO HAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE KICKS?

Yoshihiro Tajiri	*24%*
Rob Van Dam	*21%*
Booker T	*18%*
Goldberg	*15%*
Toshiaki Kawada	*14%*
Others	*8%*

Just *watching* Yoshihiro Tajiri deliver his buzzsaw-like kicks is painful, so we can only imagine what it must be like for his unfortunate opponents to *take* them. In the past year, Tajiri has shown how he can break down any foe with his precision kicks, and our insiders rewarded him with a "win" in this category. Not far behind is the kickboxing-influenced Rob Van Dam, who has an impressive array of kicks in his own right. When he incorporates steel chairs into some of these kicks, he's extremely dangerous. Booker T did well in this category, and the brutal but effective kicks of Goldberg also warranted a good number of votes. Surprisingly few votes came in for Toshiaki Kawada, who wins a lot of his matches with his masterful jumping abisegiri.

47. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST-IMPACT MANEUVER?

Fear the spear!

A definitive margin of victory here for Goldberg, whose spear remains the sport's highest-impact move (at least according to our experts). Quite a few respondents pointed out that Goldberg is something of a two-move wonder—the spear and jackhammer—which speaks volumes for the effectiveness of those two signature moves. Both of them scored very well in this category. New Japan's most dominant player of the last year, Kensuke Sasaki, can attribute a bit of that dominance to his Northern Lights bomb, which packs the force of a brainbuster. Marginal support for other moves, like the double-team Dudley deathdrop and Bradshaw's vicious lariat, the clothesline from hell. Perhaps Bradshaw would have received more recognition had it been a better year for The Acolytes.

Goldberg's spear	*30%*
Kensuke Sasaki's Northern Lights bomb	*12%*
Goldberg's jackhammer	*11%*
Bradshaw's clothesline from hell	*9%*
Dudleys' 3D	*7%*
Chavo Guerrero Jr.'s brainbuster	*5%*
Others	*26%*

48. WHICH IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE SUBMISSION HOLD?

Scott Steiner is a name synonymous with some of wrestling's most crushing holds/moves—the Frankensteiner, an array of dangerous suplexes, and now the Steiner recliner. The hold itself is not unlike a camel clutch, but when applied by Steiner, one of the most powerful men in the business, it is an instrument of torture that has catapulted him to the very top of WCW. Chris Benoit's Crippler crossface missed getting the top spot by only a few votes. It's another hold that has helped to elevate a mid-card competitor to the top tier of his federation. Further away from the top spot are Chris Jericho's torturous Boston crab, the Walls of Jericho, and another crab, Lance Storm's single-leg variation known as the Maple Leaf.

Scott Steiner's Steiner recliner	*21%*
Chris Benoit's Crippler crossface	*20%*
Chris Jericho's Walls of Jericho	*14%*
Lance Storm's Maple Leaf	*11%*
El Hijo del Santo's camel clutch	*6%*
Others	*28%*

Stay out of this recliner!

49. WHICH IS THE RISKIEST MANEUVER?

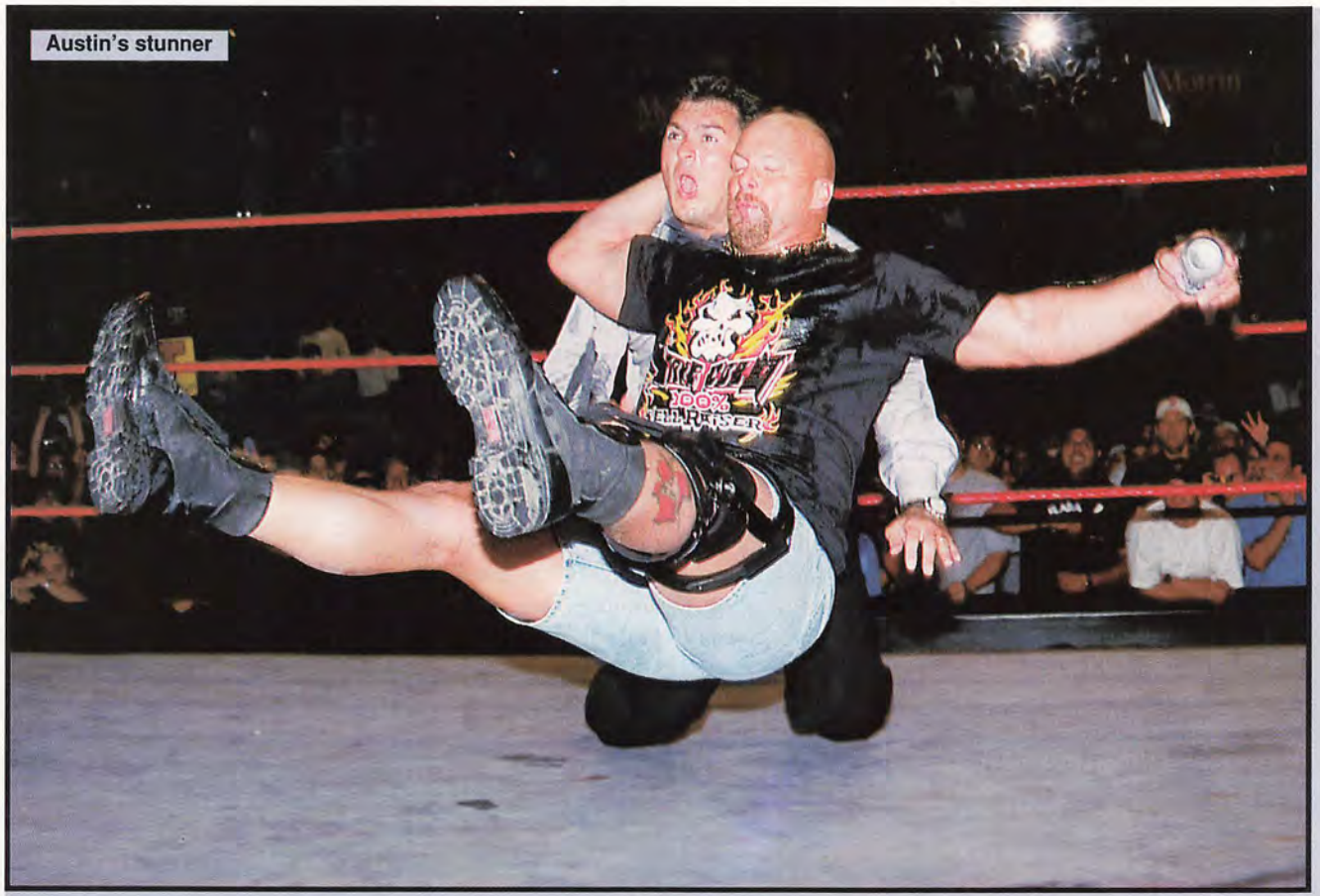
Jodie Fleisch's shooting star press to the floor 21%
Ricky Marvin's spaceman corkscrew plancha..... 19%
Dragon Kid's Dragonrana 18%
Great Sasuke's Sasuke special II 13%
Matt Hardy's moonsault press to the floor 11%
Others 18%

Last year, Jodie Fleisch topped this list as Doc Chan, the masked persona he adopts for competition in Japan. Despite abandoning the hood, Fleisch continues to astound with his ultra-high-risk moves, in particular his shooting star press. He will ascend the turnbuckles and execute the move onto opponents on the arena floor, which increases the risk of this already dangerous move at least tenfold. Ricky Marvin, a high-flying Mexican sensation, finished a close second for his wild, spiralling suicide dive. Dragon Kid's 450 splash-turned-huracanrana (the Dragonrana) also made an impressive showing. Though his brother, Jeff, is considered more of a daredevil, one of *Matt* Hardy's favorite moves, a dangerous out-of-the-ring moonsault, was recognized by our experts.

50. WHO POSSESSES THE MOST EFFECTIVE FINISHER?

Steve Austin (Stone-Cold stunner)..... 23%
Scott Steiner (Steiner recliner)..... 17%
Rob Van Dam (Van Terminator)..... 14%
Triple-H (pedigree)..... 12%
Goldberg (jackhammer)..... 11%
Kurt Angle (Olympic slam) 7%
Kensuke Sasaki (Northern Lights bomb) 5%
Others 11%

This year produced more worthy candidates in this category than we've had in any other year since we instituted this poll. Our panel of experts and insiders made it very clear, though: The Stone-Cold stunner may be a relatively simple finisher—and it's usually not hard to figure out when it's coming—but it sure is effective. How many men have kicked out of a pin attempt after taking a stunner? Precious few. Similarly, the Van Terminator leaves no survivors, just a string of casualties in its wake. Champions from WCW, New Japan, and the WWF all made their mark here, with each respective signature move earning votes. The only submission hold to place high on the list was the Steiner recliner, which stood out in a crowded field of high-impact, knockout moves.



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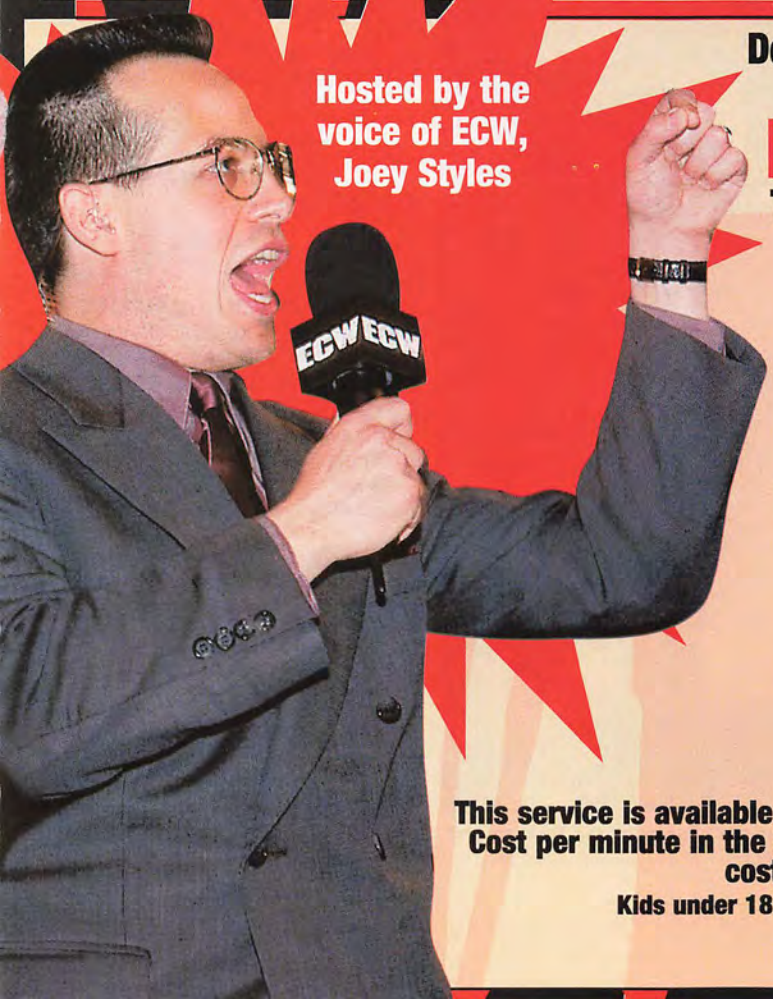

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PWI POLL 1993

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Jushin Liger 32%
- Bret Hart 18%
- Jeff Jarret 12%
- Curt Hennig 9%
- Ric Flair 8%
- Others 21%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- Ric Flair 27%
- Jushin Liger 9%
- Hulk Hogan 7%
- Lou Thesz 6%
- Bruno Sammartino 5%
- Sting 5%
- Bret Hart 4%
- The Great Muta 3%
- Buddy Rogers 3%
- Others 31%

3. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE TAG TEAM, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- Rick & Scott Steiner 21%
- The Legion of Doom 20%
- The Heavenly Bodies 11%
- The Freebirds 10%
- The British Bulldogs 4%
- The Hart Foundation 3%
- The Rockers 3%
- Rock 'n' Roll Express 3%
- Ole & Gene Anderson 3%
- Others 22%

4. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST QUALITY WRESTLING?
- WCW 68%
- WWF 28%
- Others 4%

5. WHICH IS THE DOMINANT FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?
- WWF 83%
- WCW 6%
- None 11%

6. WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN BIG VAN VADER AND HULK HOGAN?
- Big Van Vader 53%
- Hulk Hogan 47%

7. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN STING AND BRET HART?
- Hart 51%
- Sting 49%

8. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE OF WRESTLING AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?
- Cloudy 25%
- Status Quo 32%
- Promising 35%
- Shining 5%
- Hopeless 3%

9. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANAGER?
- Jim Cornette 60%
- Jimmy Hart 25%
- Bobby Heenan 7%
- Mr. Fuji 3%
- Others 5%

10. IF YOU COULD WATCH A WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH AT ANY VENUE, WHERE WOULD IT BE?
- Madison Square Garden .69%
- The Tokyo Dome 9%
- Baltimore Arena 8%
- The Omni 5%
- Kiel Auditorium 4%
- Others 5%

11. WHO IS THE BEST TELEVISION COMMENTATOR?
- Jim Ross 33%
- Jesse Ventura 29%
- Tony Schiavone 27%
- Bobby Heenan 2%
- Gorilla Monsoon 2%
- Others 7%

12. SHOULD WRESTLING HAVE A MANDATORY RETIREMENT AGE?
- Yes 12%
- No 88%

13. SHOULD ALL TITLES CHANGES HANDS ON DISQUALIFICATIONS AND COUNTOUTS?
- Yes 76%
- No 24%

Jushin Liger was a clear-cut winner in the best pound-for-pound category in 1993.

14. DO YOU THINK STEROID USE IS STILL PREVALENT IN WRESTLING?
- Yes 41%
- No 59%

15. WILL RIC FLAIR WIN HIS 10TH WORLD TITLE?
- Yes 38%
- No 62%

16. IS PAY-PER-VIEW GOOD FOR WRESTLING?
- Yes 77%
- No 23%

17. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Poor 92%
- Mediocre 6%
- Good 2%
- Excellent 0%

18. ARE THE BEST OF TODAY'S WRESTLERS AS GOOD AS THE BEST OF THOSE 40 YEARS AGO?
- Yes 66%
- No 34%

19. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Poor 44%

Mediocre 33%
Good 22%
Excellent 1%

20. WHO IS THE BEST REFEREE IN WRESTLING?
Dave Hebner 53%
Nick Patrick 35%
Dick Kroll 8%
Others 4%

21. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN IN WRESTLING?
Vince McMahon 83%
Hulk Hogan 7%
Ted Turner 7%
Others 3%

***22. WHO HAS THE BEST BOSTON CRAB?**
Rick Martel
Stan Hansen
Jim Neidhart
Skinner
Sgt. Slaughter

23. WHO HAS THE BEST CLAW-HOLD?
Kevin Von Erich
Blackjack Mulligan
Barry Windham
Baron Von Raschke
El Gigante

24. WHO HAS THE BEST CLOTHES-LINE?
Rick Steiner
Stan Hansen
Bret Hart
Hawk
Beau Beverly

25. WHO HAS THE BEST DDT?
Jim Garvin
Jake Roberts
Michael Hayes
Dr. Tom Prichard
John Tatum

26. WHO HAS THE BEST DROPKICK?
Brian Pillman
Jeff Jarrett
Shawn Michaels
Chris Walker
Jim Brunzell

27. WHO HAS THE BEST ELBOWSMASH?
Randy Savage
Dustin Rhodes
Jerry Sags
Abdullah the Butcher
Austin Idol

28. WHO HAS THE BEST FIGURE-FOUR LEGLOCK?
Ric Flair
Sting
Greg Valentine
Eddie Gilbert
Ted DiBiase

29. WHO HAS THE BEST FLYING BODYPRESS?
Rick Steamboat
Brian Pillman
The Patriot
Tom Zenk
Steve Ray

30. WHO HAS THE BEST FLYING FISTDROP?
Jerry Lawler
Marty Jannetty
Shawn Michaels
The Honky Tonk Man
Randy Savage

31. WHO HAS THE BEST FULL-NELSON?
Billy Jack Haynes
The Warlord
Ken Patera
Sid Justice
Bill Kazmaier

32. WHO HAS THE BEST LEGDROP?
Bobby Eaton
Hulk Hogan
Sid Justice
The Patriot
Terry Gordy

33. WHO HAS THE BEST MOONSAULT?
Jushin Liger
The Great Muta
Rob Zakowski
Lightning Kid
Ranger Ross

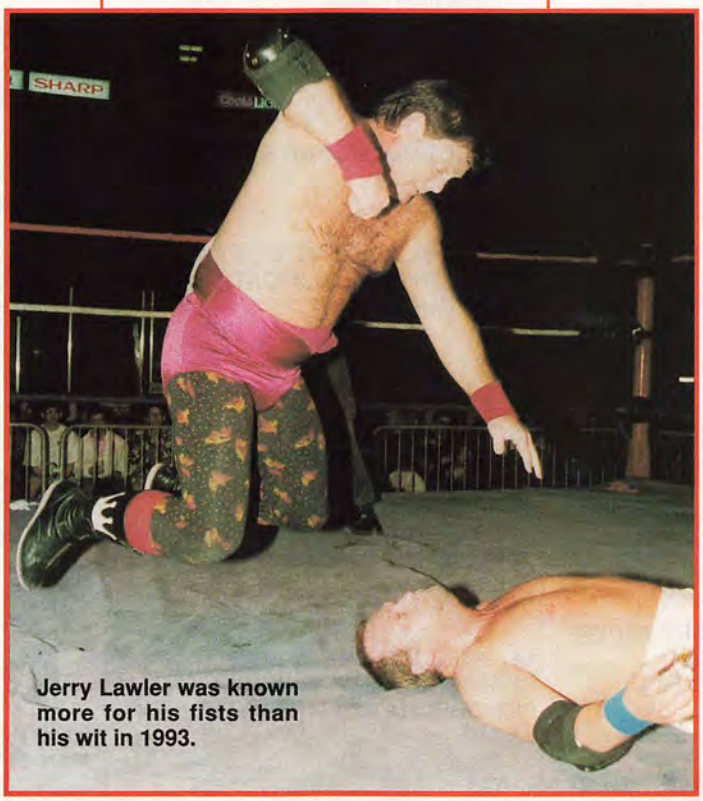
34. WHO HAS THE BEST PILEDRIVER?
The Undertaker
Terry Funk
Jerry Lawler
Eric Embry
Don Muraco

35. WHO HAS THE BEST POWERSLAM?
Steve Williams
Ron Simmons
Animal
Davey Boy Smith
Bam Bam Bigelow

36. WHO HAS THE BEST SAVATE KICK?
Stan Lane
John Tatum
Chris Adams
Bad New Brown
The Great Muta

37. WHO HAS THE BEST SCORPION DEATHLOCK?
Bret Hart
Sting
Riki Choshu
Terrence Taylor
Ron Garvin

38. WHO HAS THE BEST SLEEPERHOLD?
Ted DiBiase
Sgt. Slaughter
Tom Zenk
Virgil
Mark Youngblood



Jerry Lawler was known more for his fists than his wit in 1993.

39. WHO HAS THE BEST SUNSET FLIP?
Tom Zenk
Mike Graham
Tito Santana
Terrence Taylor
Koko B. Ware

40. WHO HAS THE BEST VERTICAL SUPLEX?
Owen Hart
Davey Boy Smith
Lex Luger
Paul Orndorff
Dick Murdoch

41. WHO HAS THE BEST OVERALL FINISHER?
Scott Steiner (Frankensteiner)
Jushin Liger (moonsault)
Steve Williams (Oklahoma stampede)
Sting (Stinger splash)
Ric Flair (figure-four)

*(Numbers 22-41 were selected by the editors and printed in *PWI*/July 1992)

PWI POLL 1994

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Jushin Liger 27%
- The Kid 24%
- Ric Flair 15%
- Bret Hart 14%
- Others 20%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- Ric Flair 55%
- Lou Thesz 7%
- Buddy Rogers 6%
- Andre the Giant 5%
- Sting 4%
- Rick Rude 4%
- Others 19%

3. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE TAG TEAM, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- The Legion of Doom 29%
- The Midnight Express 18%
- 2 Cold Scorpio & Marcus Bagwell 15%
- The Heavenly Bodies 11%
- Rick & Scott Steiner 7%
- The Freebirds 5%
- The British Bulldogs 4%
- The Hart Foundation 3%
- Others 8%

4. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN YOKOZUNA AND BIG VAN VADER?
- Big Van Vader 91%
- Yokozuna 9%

5. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN RICK AND SCOTT STEINER
- Scott Steiner 57%
- Rick Steiner 43%

6. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST-QUALITY WRESTLING?
- WCW 72%
- WWF 26%
- Others 2%

7. WHICH IS THE DOMINANT FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?
- WWF 68%
- WCW 9%
- None 23%

8. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?
- Cloudy 42%
- Promising 29%
- Status quo 24%
- Shining 3%
- Hopeless 2%

9. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANAGER?
- Jim Cornette 74%
- Harley Race 21%
- Others 5%

10. SHOULD WRESTLING HAVE A MANDATORY RETIRMENT AGE?
- Yes 8%
- No 92%

11. DO YOU THINK STEROID USE IS STILL PREVALENT IN WRESTLING?
- Yes 35%
- No 65%

12. IF YOU COULD WATCH A WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH AT ANY VENUE, WHERE WOULD IT BE?
- Madison Square Garden .71%
- The Tokyo Dome 8%
- Manhattan Center 7%
- Baltimore Arena 5%
- Korakuen Hall (Tokyo) 3%
- Others 6%

13. WILL HULK HOGAN RETURN?
- Yes 91%
- No 9%

14. SHOULD ALL TITLES CHANGE HANDS ON DISQUALIFICATIONS AND COUNTOUTS?
- Yes 87%
- No 13%

15. WHO IS THE BEST TELEVISION COMMENTATOR IN WRESTLING?
- Jesse Ventura 48%
- Jim Ross 23%
- Tony Schiavone 12%
- Bobby Heenan 11%
- Others 6%

16. WILL WE SEE A WWF WORLD CHAMPION VS. WCW WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR?
- No 94%
- Yes 6%

Picking the better Steiner was not easy back in 1994.

17. ARE THE BEST OF TODAY'S WRESTLERS AS GOOD AS THE BEST OF 40 YEARS AGO?
- Yes 68%
- No 32%

18. IS PAY-PER-VIEW GOOD FOR WRESTLING?
- Yes 71%
- No 29%

19. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Poor 90%
- Mediocre 3%
- Good 2%
- Excellent 0%

20. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Poor 53%
- Mediocre 27%
- Good 19%
- Excellent 1%

21. WHO IS THE BEST REFEREE IN WRESTLING?
- Nick Patrick 40%
- Dave Hebner 26%
- Bill Alfonso 19%
- Randy Anderson 11%
- Others 4%

22. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WWF PRESIDENT JACK TUNNEY FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F
- C 34%
- B 30%
- D 28%
- F 4%
- A 4%

23. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN IN WRESTLING?
- Vince McMahon 92%

Ted Turner 5%
Others 3%

24. DID WCW MAKE THE RIGHT MOVE BY NAMING NICK BOCKWINKEL COMMISSIONER?
Yes 39%
No 29%
Not sure 32%

25. WILL VINCE McMAHON BE FOUND GUILTY OF ILLEGAL DISTRIBUTION OF STEROIDS?
No 66%
Yes 23%
Not sure 11%

26. IF YOU ANSWERED YES, WILL McMAHON SPEND TIME IN JAIL?
No 76%
Yes 20%
Not sure 4%

27. WHICH IS THE BEST REGULARLY AIRED WEEKLY WRESTLING SHOW ON TV?
WWF Monday Night Raw ..84%
WCW Saturday Night 8%
Others 8%

28. WHICH IS ANNUALLY THE BEST WRESTLING PAY-PER-VIEW SHOW?
Royal Rumble 23%
WrestleMania 20%
Starrcade 16%
Great American Bash 14%
Survivor Series 13%
Others 14%

29. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA?
WCW World 51%
WWF World 49%

30. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?
Better 64%
Worse 36%

31. SHOULD CAGE MATCHES BE BANNED?
No 96%
Yes 4%

32. WILL THE REVIVED WWF WORLD WOMEN'S TITLE SUCCEED?
Yes 51%
No 38%
Don't know 11%

33. WHO HAS THE BEST CLOTHESLINE?
Razor Ramon 28%
Rick Steiner 26%
Big Van Vader 21%
Stan Hansen 11%
Others 14%

34. WHO HAS THE BEST DROPKICK?
2 Cold Scorpio 39%
Jushin Liger 27%
The Kid 11%
Brian Pillman 9%
Bret Hart 5%
Others 9%

35. WHO HAS THE BEST DDT?
Shawn Michaels 19%
Jake Roberts 17%
Diesel 15%
Arn Anderson 14%
Tom Prichard 13%
Others 22%

36. WHO HAS THE BEST FIGURE-FOUR LEGLOCK?
Ric Flair 88%
Sting 4%
Rick Rude 3%
Others 5%

37. WHO HAS THE BEST ELBOW-SMASH?
Dustin Rhodes 36%
Randy Savage 33%
Big Van Vader 10%
Jeff Jarrett 6%
Jerry Lawler 4%
Others 11%

38. WHO HAS THE BEST FLYING BODYPRESS?
The Kid 25%
Rick Steamboat 23%
Brian Pillman 19%
Jushin Liger 9%
2 Cold Scorpio 7%
Others 17%

39. WHO HAS THE BEST FLYING FISTRDROP?
Jerry Lawler 73%
2 Cold Scorpio 11%
Randy Savage 6%
Others 10%

40. WHO HAS THE BEST PILEDRIVER?
Undertaker 84%
Jerry Lawler 13%
Others 3%

41. WHO HAS THE BEST SAVATE KICK?
Sabu 65%
Chris Adams 12%
Tom Prichard 7%
Jim Del Ray 6%
Others 10%

42. WHO HAS THE BEST LEGDROP?
Yokozuna 32%
Bobby Eaton 25%
The Patriot 18%
Hulk Hogan 12%
Sting 6%
Others 7%

43. WHO HAS THE BEST POWERSLAM?
Big Van Vader 41%
Steve Williams 39%
Ron Simmons 10%
Bam Bam Bigelow 5%
Others 5%

44. WHO HAS THE BEST MOONSAULT?
Sabu 54%
Jushin Liger 20%
2 Cold Scorpio 10%
Big Van Vader 7%
The Kid 4%
The Great Muta 3%
Others 2%

45. WHO HAS THE BEST SCORPION DEATHLOCK?
Bret Hart 89%
Sting 5%
Owen Hart 3%
Others 3%

46. WHO HAS THE BEST SLEEPERHOLD?
Ted DiBiase 95%
Others 5%

47. WHO HAS THE BEST SUNSET FLIP?
2 Cold Scorpio 31%
Johnny B. Badd 20%
Sting 16%
Bret Hart 15%
Others 18%

48. WHO HAS THE BEST VERTICAL SUPLEX?
Owen Hart 55%
Lex Luger 22%
Steve Austin 8%
Big Van Vader 6%
Rick Rude 6%
Others 3%

49. WHO HAS THE BEST POWER BOMB?
Big Van Vader 90%
Razor Ramon 6%
Adam Bomb 2%
Others 2%

50. WHO HAS THE BEST OVERALL FINISHER?
Big Van Vader (power bomb)34%
Sabu (moonsault) 20%
Bret Hart (sharpshooter) ..15%
Ric Flair (figure-four) 10%
Others 21%

PWI POLL 1995

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Shawn Michaels 26%
- Sabu 19%
- Big Van Vader 13%
- Bret Hart 11%
- Jushin Liger 5%
- Others 26%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- Ric Flair 63%
- Sabu 8%
- Lou Thesz 6%
- Buddy Rogers 5%
- Big Van Vader 5%
- Others 13%

3. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE TAG TEAM, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- The Legion of Doom 36%
- Rick & Scott Steiner 20%
- Midnight Express 18%
- British Bulldogs 8%
- Hart Foundation 7%
- Others 11%

4. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN HULK HOGAN AND DIESEL?
- Hulk Hogan 84%
- Diesel 16%

5. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN HULK HOGAN AND HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING CHAMPION GEORGE FOREMAN?
- Hulk Hogan 83%
- George Foreman 17%

6. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST-QUALITY WRESTLING?
- WCW 58%
- WWF 36%
- Others 6%

7. HAS WCW SURPASSED THE WWF AS THE PREMIER FEDERATION IN THE WORLD?
- No 49%
- Yes 43%
- Undecided 8%

8. WILL BRET AND OWEN HART REUNITE IN 1995?
- No 75%
- Yes 25%

9. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Experts thought Bobby Heenan was better than Jerry Lawler as a commentator in 1995.

- Promising 43%
- Status quo 33%
- Cloudy 15%
- Shining 8%
- Hopeless 1%

10. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS ONE YEAR AGO?
- Better 76%
- Worse 24%

11. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST SUPERSTAR?
- Shawn Michaels 38%
- Woman 15%
- Diesel 13%
- Tamara Murphy Fytch 11%
- Others 23%

12. DO YOU THINK STEROID USE IS STILL PREVALENT IN WRESTLING?
- No 82%
- Yes 18%

13. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANAGER?
- Jim Cornette 54%
- Jimmy Hart 15%
- Col. Rob Parker 11%
- Harley Race 7%
- Ted DiBiase 6%
- Others 7%

14. IF YOU COULD WATCH A WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH AT ANY VENUE, WHERE WOULD IT BE?
- Madison Square Garden .62%
- ECW Arena 19%
- Tokyo Dome 6%
- Baltimore Arena 5%
- Others 8%

15. WILL HULK HOGAN RE-RETIRE?
- Yes 69%
- No 31%

16. WILL RIC FLAIR COME OUT OF RETIREMENT?
- No 57%
- Yes 43%

17. WHO IS THE BEST TELEVISION COMMENTATOR IN WRESTLING?
- Bobby Heenan 21%
- Jerry Lawler 17%
- Tony Schiavone 15%
- Gene Okerlund 12%
- Joey Styles 8%
- Jim Ross 6%
- Vince McMahon 5%
- Others 16%

18. WILL WE SEE A WWF WORLD CHAMPION VS. WCW WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR?
- No 99%
- Yes 1%

19. ARE THE BEST OF TODAY'S WRESTLERS AS GOOD AS THE BEST OF 40 YEARS AGO?
- Yes 65%
- No 35%

20. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Poor 98%
- Mediocre 2%

21. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Poor 39%
- Mediocre 37%
- Good 22%
- Excellent 2%

22. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WWF PRESIDENT JACK TUNNEY FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F
- C 30%
- D 28%
- B 22%
- A 10%
- F 10%

23. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WCW COMMISSIONER NICK BOCKWINKEL FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C,

D, OR F
D 33%
C 30%
B 25%
F 7%
A 5%

24. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN IN WRESTLING?
Hulk Hogan 62%
Vince McMahon 33%
Ted Turner 3%
Others 2%

25. WHICH IS THE BEST WEEKLY WRESTLING SHOW ON TV?
WWF Monday Night Raw .80%
WCW Saturday Night 8%
WWF Action Zone 4%
Others 8%

26. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA?
WCW World 59%
WWF World 41%

27. HAVE BULL NAKANO AND ALUNDRA BLAYZE SUCCEEDED IN REJUVENATING WOMEN'S WRESTLING IN NORTH AMERICA?
No 74%
Yes 23%
Too soon to tell 3%

28. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?
Big Van Vader 53%
Cactus Jack 21%
Sabu 11%
Terry Funk 6%
King Kong Bundy 4%
Kevin Sullivan 3%
Others 2%

29. WHO IS WRESTLING'S FASTEST MAN?
Sabu 54%
The Kid 43%
Others 3%

30. DOES THE ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP POSE A THREAT TO PRO WRESTLING?
No 83%
Yes 17%

31. WHICH IS THE BEST INDEPENDENT FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?
ECW 48%
Smoky Mountain 22%
USWA 17%
Others 13%

32. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTERVIEWS?
Big Van Vader 20%
Shawn Michaels 18%
Jerry Lawler 15%
Owen Hart 14%
Bob Backlund 13%
Others 20%

33. WHICH IS THE BEST SPECIALTY MATCH?
Steel cage 17%
Barbed wire 15%
Chain 14%
"I Quit" 12%
Texas death 8%
Others 34%

34. WHO IS THE BEST FOREIGN WRESTLER?
The Great Muta 22%
Toshiaki Kawada 20%
Shinya Hashimoto 18%
Konnan 10%
Bull Nakano 5%
Others 25%

35. WHO IS THE BEST FOREIGN WRESTLER CURRENTLY COMPETING IN NORTH AMERICA?
Sabu 41%
Davey Boy Smith 26%
Lord Steven Regal 12%
Yokozuna 7%
Others 14%

36. WHICH WAS THE BEST PAY-PER-VIEW EVENT OF THE YEAR?
WrestleMania X 25%
Halloween Havoc 23%
Royal Rumble 21%
Bash at the Beach 12%
Starrcade 9%
Others 10%

37. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST NEW PROSPECT?
Alex Wright 23%
Bryant Anderson 18%
Jean-Paul LeVeque 17%
Osamu Nishimura 9%
Others 33%

38. WHO HAS THE BEST CLOTHESLINE?
Rick Steiner 27%
Hulk Hogan 26%
Irwin R. Schyster 22%
Lex Luger 18%
Others 7%

39. WHO HAS THE BEST DROPKICK?
The Kid 33%
2 Cold Scorpio 31%
Jeff Jarrett 15%
Owen Hart 12%

40. WHO HAS THE BEST ELBOW-SMASH?
Randy Savage 30%
Diesel 28%
Dustin Rhodes 20%
Brian Knobs 10%
Others 12%

41. WHO HAS THE BEST LEGDROP?
Hulk Hogan 68%
Yokozuna 11%
Sabu 9%
The Patriot 6%
Others 6%

42. WHO HAS THE BEST FLYING BODYPRESS?
2 Cold Scorpio 22%
Owen Hart 20%
The Kid 18%
Brian Pillman 15%
Others 25%

43. WHO HAS THE BEST PILEDRIVER?
Undertaker 79%
Jerry Lawler 12%
Shawn Michaels 9%

44. WHO HAS THE BEST SAVATE KICK?
Shawn Michaels 41%
Sabu 35%
Kwang 10%
Others 14%

45. WHO HAS THE BEST POWERSLAM?
Davey Boy Smith 32%
Steve Williams 31%
Razor Ramon 18%
Ron Simmons 9%
Lex Luger 8%
Others 2%

46. WHO HAS THE BEST MOONSAULT?
Sabu 57%
Big Van Vader 14%
Al Snow 12%
The Kid 11%
2 Cold Scorpio 5%
Others 1%

47. WHO HAS THE BEST SCORPION DEATHLOCK?
Bret Hart 68%
Owen Hart 20%
Sting 6%
Others 6%

48. WHO HAS THE BEST VERTICAL SUPLEX?
Davey Boy Smith 36%
Lex Luger 25%
Steve Austin 20%
Owen Hart 8%
Tasmaniac 7%
Others 4%

49. WHO HAS THE BEST POWER BOMB?
Big Van Vader 52%
Diesel 46%
Others 2%

50. WHO HAS THE BEST OVERALL FINISHER?
Big Van Vader
(power bomb) 28%
Diesel (power bomb) 24%
911 (choke-slam) 18%
Bob Backlund
(chicken wing) 13%
Hulk Hogan (legdrop) 12%
Others 5%

PWI POLL 1996

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Rey Misterio Jr. 19%
- Shawn Michaels 15%
- Bret Hart 14%
- Sabu 12%
- Mitsuharu Misawa 7%
- The Great Muta 5%
- Others 28%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- Sabu 25%
- Shawn Michaels 22%
- Ric Flair 8%
- Big Van Vader 7%
- Antonio Inoki 6%
- Others 32%

3. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE TAG TEAM, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- The Road Warriors 30%
- Rick & Scott Steiner 16%
- The Midnight Express 11%
- The Nasty Boys 10%
- The British Bulldogs 7%
- The Hart Foundation 7%
- Public Enemy 5%
- Others 14%

4. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN BRET HART AND RANDY SAVAGE?
- Bret Hart 86%
- Randy Savage 14%

5. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST QUALITY WRESTLING?
- WCW 48%
- WWF 39%
- ECW 11%
- Others 2%

6. HAS WCW SURPASSED THE WWF AS THE PREMIER FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?
- Yes 58%
- No 40%
- Undecided 2%

7. WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, WILL THE WWF AND WCW ELIMINATE ALL NON-TELEVISED ARENA CARDS FROM THEIR SCHEDULES?
- No 82%
- Yes 13%
- Not sure 5%

8. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?
- Status quo 38%
- Promising 34%
- Cloudy 20%
- Shining 7%
- Hopeless 1%

9. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANAGER?
- Jimmy Hart 43%
- Jim Cornette 40%
- Sherri Martel 6%
- Kevin Sullivan 5%
- Ted DiBiase 4%
- Others 2%

10. WHO REALLY RULES MONDAY NIGHTS?
- WCW 48%
- WWF 43%
- Even 5%
- Neither 4%

11. HOGAN OR FLAIR: WHO WILL LAUGH LAST?
- Hulk Hogan 69%
- Ric Flair 31%

12. SHOULD SHAWN MICHAELS RETIRE?
- No 71%
- Yes 14%
- Undecided 15%

13. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?
- Tammy "Sunny" Sytch 47%
- Beulah McGillicutty 19%
- Woman 15%
- The Diamond Doll 14%

How could anyone argue with the choice of Tammy "Sunny" Sytch as wrestling's sexiest woman in 1996?

- Others 5%

14. WHO IS THE BEST TELEVISION COMMENTATOR IN WRESTLING?
- Jerry Lawler 25%
- Joey Styles 23%
- Bobby Heenan 12%
- Jim Ross 8%
- Tony Schiavone 7%
- Gene Okerlund 6%
- Vince McMahon 5%
- Others 14%

15. WILL WE SEE A WWF WORLD CHAMPION VS. WCW WORLD CHAMPION MATCH WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR?
- No 100%
- Yes 0%

16. IS THERE JUST ENOUGH, TOO MUCH, OR NOT ENOUGH PAY-PER-VIEW WRESTLING?
- Just enough 53%
- Too much 44%
- Not enough 3%

17. SHOULD THE ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIPS BE OUTLAWED?
- No 94%
- Yes 6%

18. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Poor 90%
- Mediocre 10%

19. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Mediocre 38%
- Poor 37%
- Good 18%
- Excellent 7%

20. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO INTERIM WWF PRESIDENT GORILLA MONSOON FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F
- D 32%
- A 30%
- F 18%
- B 17%
- C 3%

21. GIVE A LETTER TO WCW COMMISSIONER NICK BOCKWINKEL FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F
- D 48%
- F 25%
- C 19%
- B 5%
- A 3%

22. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN IN WRESTLING?
- Hulk Hogan 44%
- Vince McMahon 24%
- Ted Turner 20%
- Eric Bischoff 12%

23. WHICH IS THE BEST WRESTLING SHOW ON TV, PAY-PER-VIEW, CABLE, OR OTHERWISE?
- WWF's Royal Rumble . . .19%
- WCW's Starrcade 16%
- WWF's WrestleMania 14%
- *WWF Monday Night Raw* .12%
- *WCW Monday Nitro* 12%
- WWF King of the Ring 9%
- Others 18%

24. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA?
- WWF World 52%
- WCW World 48%

25. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?
- Better 61%
- Worse 39%

26. SHOULD *PWI* RECOGNIZE A THIRD WORLD TITLE?
- No 91%
- Yes 9%

27. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Shane Douglas 12%
- Eddie Guerrero 11%
- Dan Severn 9%
- The Kid 8%
- Dean Malenko 7%
- Steve Austin 6%
- Others 47%

28. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Lex Luger 40%
- Sid Vicious 30%
- Owen Hart 9%
- The Undertaker 8%
- Hulk Hogan 6%
- Others 7%

29. WHO IS WRESTLING'S WILDEST DAREDEVIL?
- Rey Misterio Jr. 42%
- Sabu 35%
- Jushin Liger 5%
- Others 18%

30. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?
- Big Van Vader 53%
- The Undertaker 17%
- The Giant 10%
- Cactus Jack 8%
- One Man Gang 5%
- Others 7%

31. WHICH IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLING TAG TEAM?
- Public Enemy 42%
- The Nasty Boys 41%
- The Gangstas 11%
- PG-13 . . . . . .4%
- Others 2%

32. WHICH IS THE BEST INDEPENDENT FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?
- ECW 62%
- USWA 15%
- AAA 14%
- Others 9%

33. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTERVIEWS?
- Cactus Jack 19%
- Big Van Vader 17%
- Paul Bearer 13%
- Jeff Jarrett 12%
- Jim Cornette 11%
- Public Enemy 9%
- Bob Backlund 6%
- Others 13%

34. WHO GIVES THE WORST INTERVIEWS?
- Randy Savage 24%
- Hulk Hogan 22%
- Ric Flair 14%
- Razor Ramon 12%
- The Kid 10%
- Others 18%

35. WHICH IS THE BEST SPECIALTY MATCH?
- Falls-count-anywhere 35%
- Steel cage 15%
- Ladder 14%
- Chain 13%
- Others 23%

36. WHO IS THE BEST FOREIGN WRESTLER?
- Mitsuharu Misawa 24%
- The Great Muta 22%
- Rey Misterio Jr. 18%
- Antonio Inoki 9%
- Nobuhiko Takada 8%
- Jushin Liger 7%
- Others 12%

37. WHO IS THE BEST FOREIGN WRESTLER CURRENTLY WRESTLING PRIMARILY IN NORTH AMERICA?
- Sabu 35%
- Davey Boy Smith 24%
- Yokozuna 14%
- Lord Steven Regal 11%
- Others 16%

38. WILL 1996 BE HULK HOGAN'S FINAL YEAR IN WRESTLING?
- No 59%
- Yes 39%
- Unsure 2%

39. WHO HAS THE BEST CLOTHESLINE?
- Hulk Hogan 40%
- Lex Luger 15%
- The Undertaker 14%
- The Giant 10%
- Others 21%

40. WHO HAS THE BEST DROPKICK?
- Alex Wright 22%
- Rey Misterio Jr. 19%
- The Kid 18%
- Eddie Guerrero 17%
- 2 Cold Scorpio 16%
- Others 8%

41. WHO HAS THE BEST MOONSAULT?
- 2 Cold Scorpio 33%
- Rey Misterio Jr. 32%
- Sabu 19%
- The Great Muta 10%
- Big Van Vader 6%

42. WHO HAS THE BEST FLYING BODYPRESS?
- Sabu 40%
- Shawn Michaels 30%
- The Kid 10%
- Rey Misterio Jr. 8%
- Brian Pillman 7%
- Others 6%

43. WHO HAS THE BEST PILEDRIVER?
- The Undertaker 80%
- Jerry Lawler 8%
- Jeff Jarrett 5%
- Paul Orndorff 5%
- Others 2%

44. WHO HAS THE BEST LEGDROP?
- Hulk Hogan 75%
- Diesel 10%
- Yokozuna 9%
- Ahmed Johnson 4%
- Others 2%

45. WHO HAS THE BEST POWERSLAM?
- Ahmed Johnson 29%
- Davey Boy Smith 28%
- Lex Luger 20%
- Big Van Vader 15%
- Others 8%

46. WHO HAS THE BEST SCORPION DEATHLOCK/SHARPSHOOTER?
- Bret Hart 45%
- Sting 44%
- Owen Hart 6%
- Others 5%

47. WHO HAS THE BEST VERTICAL SUPLEX?
- Davey Boy Smith 35%
- Ric Flair 21%
- Hulk Hogan 15%
- Lex Luger 13%
- Brian Christopher 9%
- Others 7%

48. WHO HAS THE BEST POWER BOMB?
- Big Van Vader 46%
- Diesel 46%
- Sid Vicious 8%

49. WHO HAS THE BEST OVERALL FINISHER?
- Bret Hart (sharpshooter) . .25%
- The Undertaker (tombstone piledriver) . .22%
- Ahmed Johnson (Pearl River plunge) 15%
- Razor Ramon (Razor's edge) 14%
- Hulk Hogan (legdrop) 13%
- Others 11%

50. WHAT IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANEUVER?
- The moonsault 47%
- The flying bodypress 22%
- The double-dropkick 12%
- The vertical suplex 11%
- Others 8%

PWI POLL 1997

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Rey Misterio Jr. 17%
- Shawn Michaels 16%
- Eddie Guerrero 13%
- Mitsuharu Misawa 12%
- Bret Hart 12%
- Jushin Liger 8%
- Dean Malenko 6%
- Others 16%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- Shawn Michaels 22%
- Sabu 20%
- Rey Misterio Jr. 16%
- Steve Austin 15%
- Chris Benoit 11%
- Others 16%

3. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE TAG TEAM, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- Rick & Scott Steiner 28%
- The Road Warriors 17%
- The Midnight Express 14%
- Harlem Heat 9%
- The British Bulldogs 6%
- The Hart Foundation 5%
- The Eliminators 5%
- Others 16%

4. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN HULK HOGAN AND SHAWN MICHAELS?
- Shawn Michaels 65%
- Hulk Hogan 35%

5. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST QUALITY WRESTLING?
- WCW 47%
- WWF 37%
- ECW 16%

6. WHICH IS THE PREMIER FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?
- WCW 60%
- WWF 37%
- ECW 3%

7. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?
- Promising 42%
- Status quo 25%
- Cloudy 17%
- Shining 16%
- Hopeless 0%

8. WHO REALLY RULES MONDAY NIGHTS?
- WCW 63%
- WWF 33%
- Even/not sure 4%

9. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANAGER?
- Jimmy Hart 35%
- Ted DiBiase 30%
- Clarence Mason 13%
- Sherri Martel 8%
- Jim Cornette 8%
- Others 6%

10. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?
- Kimberly 36%
- Sunny 32%
- Marlena 9%
- Debra McMichael 7%
- Beulah McGillicutty 6%
- Francine 5%
- Others 5%

11. WHO IS THE BEST TELEVISION COMMENTATOR IN WRESTLING?
- Jim Ross 23%
- Mike Tenay 19%
- Jerry Lawler 18%
- Joey Styles 16%
- Tony Schiavone 10%
- Bobby Heenan 9%
- Others 5%

12. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Poor 92%
- Mediocre 8%

13. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Mediocre 34%
- Poor 33%
- Good 28%
- Excellent 5%

14. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN IN WRESTLING?
- Eric Bischoff 34%
- Hulk Hogan 31%
- Vince McMahon 26%
- Ted Turner 9%

15. WHICH IS THE BEST WRESTLING SHOW ON TV, PAY-PER-VIEW, CABLE, OR OTHERWISE?
- *WCW Monday Nitro* 40%
- *WWF Monday Night Raw* .19%
- WWF's Royal Rumble 15%
- WWF's WrestleMania 10%
- WCW's Starrcade 6%

Think Ultimo Dragon considered Dean Malenko to be underrated in '97?

- ECW's weekly show 6%
- Others 4%

16. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA?
- WWF World 54%
- WCW World 46%

17. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?
- Better 81%
- Worse 19%

18. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Dean Malenko 17%
- Chris Benoit 15%
- "Diamond" Dallas Page .14%
- Eddie Guerrero 7%
- Hunter Hearst Helmsley .6%
- Chris Candido 5%
- Others 36%

19. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Hulk Hogan 38%
- Big Van Vader 25%
- Sid Vicious 14%
- Lex Luger 8%
- Others 15%

20. WHO IS WRESTLING'S WILDEST DAREDEVIL?
- Rey Misterio Jr. 53%
- Sabu 22%
- Jushin Liger 15%
- Shawn Michaels 5%
- Others 5%

21. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?
- Sid Vicious 36%
- The Giant 28%
- The Undertaker 16%

Mankind 9%
The Sandman 6%

22. WHICH IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLING TAG TEAM?
Scott Hall & Kevin Nash ..37%
Harlem Heat 19%
The Nasty Boys 18%
The Gangstas 13%
The Eliminators 5%
Others 8%

23. WHICH IS THE BEST INDEPENDENT FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?
ECW 89%
USWA 7%
Others 4%

24. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTERVIEWS?
Steve Austin 17%
Mankind 16%
Arn Anderson 15%
Ric Flair 14%
Shawn Michaels 13%
Others 25%

25. WHICH IS THE BEST SPECIALTY MATCH?
Falls-count-anywhere 32%
Steel cage 17%
Royal Rumble 12%
Ladder 10%
Chain 9%
Others 20%

26. WHO IS THE BEST FOREIGN WRESTLER?
Mitsuharu Misawa 56%
Jushin Liger 14%
Shinya Hashimoto 8%
Konnan 5%
Others 17%

27. WILL 1997 BE HULK HOGAN'S FINAL YEAR IN WRESTLING?
No 73%
Yes 25%
Unsure 2%

28. WHICH WRESTLER WILL BE THE NEXT TO JUMP FEDERATIONS?
Hulk Hogan 13%
Shawn Michaels 12%
Sting 11%
Big Van Vader 9%
Lex Luger 9%
The Giant 7%
The Undertaker 6%
Others 33%

29. CAN THE NWO OVERTAKE WCW?
No 64%
Yes 26%
Unsure 10%

30. ARE THERE TOO MANY WRESTLING PAY-PER-VIEWS?
Yes 64%
No 36%

31. SHOULD ECW GET WORLD TITLE STATUS?
Yes 51%
No 44%
Unsure 5%

32. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?
The Giant 59%
Steve Austin 17%
Sid Vicious 6%
Big Van Vader 5%
Others 13%

33. SHOULD THE WWF MOVE *RAW* TO ANOTHER NIGHT?
Yes 79%
No 21%

34. CAN WOMEN'S WRESTLING THRIVE AGAIN IN THE U.S.?
No 78%
Yes 22%

35. SHOULD WRESTLING GET A PG-14 RATING?
Yes 54%
No 40%
Unsure 6%

36. WHO IS THE MOST PROMISING YOUNG STAR?
Rocky Maivia 34%
Chris Jericho 29%
Stevie Richards 7%
Others 30%

37. IS WRESTLING GANG VIOLENCE GETTING OUT OF HAND?
Yes 51%
No 49%

38. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WWF PRESIDENT GORILLA MONSOON FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F
C 38%
B 33%
A 12%
D 12%
F 5%

39. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WCW SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ERIC BISCHOFF FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F
F 77%
D 9%
C 7%
B 4%
A 3%

40. WILL THE FOX NETWORK OR ANY OTHER NATIONAL OVER-THE-AIR NETWORK AIR A REGULAR WRESTLING PROGRAM WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?
Yes 51%
No 49%

41. WHO HAS THE BEST CLOTHESLINE?
Lex Luger 29%
Kevin Nash 25%
The Giant 15%
The Undertaker 9%
Rick Steiner 8%
Others 14%

42. WHO HAS THE BEST DROPKICK?
Rey Misterio Jr. 18%
Syxx 17%
Alex Wright 16%
Eddie Guerrero 14%
Jeff Jarrett 13%
Owen Hart 9%
Others 13%

43. WHO HAS THE BEST MOONSAULT?
Rey Misterio Jr. 41%
Flash Funk 30%
Sabu 15%
Others 14%

44. WHO HAS THE BEST PILEDRIVER?
The Undertaker 92%
Others 8%

45. WHO HAS THE BEST POWERSLAM?
Davey Boy Smith 47%
Ahmed Johnson 23%
Lex Luger 22%
Others 8%

46. WHO HAS THE BEST SUBMISSION LEGLOCK?
Bret Hart 49%
Dean Malenko 40%
Others 11%

47. WHO HAS THE BEST VERTICAL SUPLEX?
Davey Boy Smith 48%
Taz 15%
Chris Benoit 11%
The Giant 9%
Shane Douglas 8%
Lex Luger 5%
Others 4%

48. WHO HAS THE BEST POWER BOMB?
Kevin Nash 37%
Sid Vicious 35%
Big Van Vader 22%
Others 6%

49. WHO HAS THE BEST OVERALL FINISHER?
"Diamond" Dallas Page (Diamond cutter) 19%
The Undertaker (tombstone piledriver) ..18%
Steve Austin (Stone-Cold stunner) ...16%
Bret Hart (sharpshooter) ..14%
Ahmed Johnson (Pearl River plunge) ...13%
The Giant (choke-slam) ...9%
Others 11%

50. WHAT IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANEUVER?
The power bomb 38%
The moonsault 30%
The choke-slam 12%
Others 20%

PWI POLL 1998

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Eddie Guerrero 18%
- Shawn Michaels 15%
- Dean Malenko 14%
- Rey Misterio Jr. 12%
- Bret Hart 9%
- Chris Jericho 7%
- Ultimo Dragon 5%
- Others 20%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- Rey Misterio Jr. 28%
- Shawn Michaels 20%
- Sabu 19%
- Ultimo Dragon 11%
- Steve Austin 6%
- Others 16%

3. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE TAG TEAM, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- Rick & Scott Steiner 32%
- The Road Warriors 15%
- The Midnight Express 12%
- Scott Hall & Kevin Nash 8%
- The Rock 'n' Roll Express 5%
- The Hart Foundation 4%
- Harlem Heat 3%
- Others 21%

4. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN SHAWN MICHAELS AND STING?
- Shawn Michaels 52%
- Sting 48%

5. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST QUALITY WRESTLING?
- WCW 59%
- WWF 36%
- ECW 5%

6. WHICH IS THE PREMIER FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?
- WCW 61%
- WWF 35%
- ECW 4%

7. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?
- Promising 41%
- Shining 37%
- Status quo 19%
- Cloudy 3%
- Hopeless 0%

8. WHO REALLY RULES MONDAY NIGHTS?
- WCW 84%
- WWF 16%

9. WILL HULK HOGAN RETURN TO THE WWF DURING THE NEXT YEAR?
- Yes 51%
- No 41%
- Undecided 8%

10. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?
- Sunny 28%
- Sable 24%
- Kimberly 22%
- Beulah McGillicutty 12%
- Francine 6%
- Chyna 5%
- Others 3%

11. WHO IS THE BEST TELEVISION COMMENTATOR IN WRESTLING?
- Mike Tenay 27%
- Tony Schiavone 19%
- Jim Ross 17%
- Larry Zbyszko 9%
- Joey Styles 9%
- Jerry Lawler 8%
- Bobby Heenan 7%
- Others 4%

12. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Poor 81%
- Mediocre 19%

13. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Mediocre 33%
- Good 32%
- Poor 25%
- Excellent 10%

14. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN IN WRESTLING?
- Eric Bischoff 40%
- Vince McMahon 31%
- Hulk Hogan 20%
- Paul E. Dangerously 5%
- Others 4%

15. WHICH IS THE BEST WEEKLY WRESTLING SHOW ON TV?
- *WCW Monday Nitro* 47%
- *WWF Raw* 34%
- *WCW Thunder* 11%
- ECW's weekly show 6%
- Others 2%

16. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA?
- WCW World 59%
- WWF World 41%

17. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?
- Better 94%
- Worse 6%

18. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Chris Jericho 16%
- Rocky Maivia 15%
- Hunter Hearst Helmsley 14%
- Disco Inferno 11%
- Taka Michinoku 9%
- Others 35%

19. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Sting 29%
- Curt Hennig 24%
- Steve Austin 15%
- Konnan 9%
- Lex Luger 7%
- The Sandman 6%
- Others 10%

Dennis Rodman was no champion, but he showed a lot of potential in the ring in '98.

20. WHO IS WRESTLING'S WILDEST DAREDEVIL?
- Sabu 28%
- Rey Misterio Jr. 26%
- Cactus Jack 18%
- Shawn Michaels 11%
- Rob Van Dam 7%
- Others 10%

21. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?
- Steve Austin 33%
- Cactus Jack 22%
- "Diamond" Dallas Page 18%
- Bill Goldberg 12%
- New Jack 6%
- Others 9%

22. WHAT PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE FROM ANOTHER SPORT SHOULD PURSUE A FULL-TIME CAREER AS A WRESTLER?
- Dennis Rodman 18%
- Kevin Greene 16%
- Mike Tyson 15%
- Reggie White 12%

Butterbean 6%
Others 33%

23. WILL MUSIC CITY WRESTLING BECOME AS STRONG AS THE USWA WAS?
Yes 48%
No 33%
Undecided 19%

24. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTERVIEWS?
Steve Austin 22%
Larry Zbyszko 19%
Ric Flair 16%
Hulk Hogan 13%
Rocky Maivia 7%
Others 23%

25. WHICH IS THE BEST SPECIALTY MATCH?
Falls-count-anywhere 33%
Ladder 18%
Steel cage 16%
Barbed wire 11%
Others 22%

26. WHO IS THE BEST JAPANESE WRESTLER?
Mitsuharu Misawa 36%
Kensuke Sasaki 21%
Ultimo Dragon 18%
Taka Michinoku 7%
Keiji Muto 5%
Shinya Hashimoto 4%
Masa Chono 3%
Others 6%

27. CAN THE WWF RECLAIM ITS SPOT AS THE NUMBER-ONE FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?
No 53%
Yes 47%

28. WAS BRET HART SCREWED BY THE WWF?
Yes 64%
No 36%

29. WILL THE NWO SURVIVE ANOTHER YEAR?
Yes 51%
No 49%

30. AS SCOTT HALL OFTEN SAYS IN HIS IN-RING "SURVEYS," DO YOU GO TO WCW EVENTS PRIMARILY TO SEE THE NWO OR TO SEE WCW?
WCW 52%
NWO 48%

31. SHOULD ECW GET WORLD TITLE STATUS?
No 51%
Yes 48%
Unsure 1%

32. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?
Ken Shamrock 26%
Randy Savage 23%
The Giant 20%
Taz 9%
Others 22%

33. WAS ADDING *THUNDER* A GOOD IDEA BY WCW?
Yes 59%
No 41%

34. HAVE YOU EVER TURNED OFF A WWF SHOW BECAUSE OF LEWDNESS?
Yes 53%
No 47%

35. SHOULD THE WWF'S *RAW IS WAR* GET A PG-14 RATING?
Yes 63%
No 29%
Undecided 8%

36. WHO IS WRESTLING'S MOST PROMISING NEW STAR?
Bill Goldberg 34%
Taka Michinoku 25%
Justin Credible 13%
Juventud Guerrera 11%
Prince Iaukea 6%
Others 11%

37. SHOULD THERE BE MORE STRINGENT RULES ENFORCEMENT IN WRESTLING?
Yes 58%
No 42%

38. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WWF COMMISSIONER SGT. SLAUGHTER FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F
D 37%
C 25%
B 20%
F 13%
A 5%

39. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WCW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN J.J. DILLON FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F
C 58%
D 14%
B 13%
A 10%
F 5%

40. SHOULD THIS BE RIC FLAIR'S LAST YEAR AS A WRESTLER?
Yes 54%
No 46%

41. WHO HAS THE BEST CLOTHESLINE?
Rick Steiner 28%
The Undertaker 26%
Vader 13%
Lex Luger 11%
Hawk 6%
Others 16%

42. WHO HAS THE BEST HURACANRANA?
Juventud Guerrera 37%
Scott Steiner 33%
Ken Shamrock 15%
Rey Misterio Jr. 7%
Others 8%

43. WHO HAS THE BEST MOONSAULT?
Ultimo Dragon 32%
Flash Funk 27%
Reckless Youth 11%
Rey Misterio Jr. 10%
Others 20%

44. WHO HAS THE BEST PILEDRIVER?
The Undertaker 81%
Kane 12%
Others 7%

45. WHICH IS THE BEST SUBMISSION HOLD?
Bret Hart's sharpshooter .28%
Ken Shamrock's anklelock .22%
Perry Saturn's rings of Saturn 15%
Chris Benoit's Crippler crossface 13%
Tazz' Tazz-mission 12%
Others 10%

46. WHICH IS THE RISKIEST MOVE?
corkscrew plancha 31%
outside-the-ring huracanrana 22%
Michinoku driver 16%
Liger bomb 10%
Others 21%

47. WHO HAS THE BEST SUPLEXES?
Taz 38%
Ken Shamrock 14%
Chris Benoit 12%
Shane Douglas 11%
Dean Malenko 9%
Curt Hennig 7%
Others 9%

48. WHAT IS THE BEST TWO-MAN FINISHING MOVE USED BY A TAG TEAM?
The Steiners' top-rope bulldog 34%
The Road Warriors' clothesline 19%
Harlem Heat's Harlem hangover 17%
The Dudleys' 3D 13%
Others 17%

49. WHO HAS THE BEST SUBMISSION LEGLOCK?
Bret Hart 35%
Sting 18%
Dean Malenko 17%
Ken Shamrock 9%
Owen Hart 7%
Chris Jericho 4%
Others 10%

50. WHO HAS THE BEST OVERALL FINISHER?
Dallas Page (Diamond cutter) .24%
Steve Austin (Stone-Cold stunner) ...22%
The Undertaker (tombstone piledriver) ..15%
Bret Hart (sharpshooter) ..11%
Lex Luger (torture rack) ...9%
Tazz (Tazz-mission) 5%
Ultimo Dragon (Dragon sleeper) 4%
Others 10%

PWI POLL 1999

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Billy Kidman 17%
- Chris Benoit 15%
- X-Pac 13%
- Rey Misterio Jr. 12%
- Rob Van Dam 9%
- Juventud Guerrera 8%
- Others 26%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- Rey Misterio Jr. 30%
- Steve Austin 20%
- Billy Kidman 10%
- Chris Benoit 8%
- Sabu 7%
- Ric Flair 6%
- Others 19%

3. DO YOU THINK IT'S GOOD OR BAD FOR WRESTLING PROMOTIONS TO INVOLVE MAINSTREAM STARS?
- Good 54%
- Bad 45%
- Undecided 1%

4. DO YOU THINK TELEVISED JAPANESE WRESTLING COULD CATCH ON IN THE U.S. IF IT WERE REGULARLY TELEVISED?
- No 49%
- Yes 45%
- Undecided 6%

5. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST QUALITY WRESTLING?
- WCW 57%
- WWF 35%
- ECW 8%

6. WHICH IS THE PREMIER FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?
- WCW 49%
- WWF 48%
- ECW 3%

7. WOULD YOU JUDGE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?
- Shining 42%
- Promising 37%
- Status Quo 20%
- Cloudy 1%
- Hopeless 0%

8. WHO REALLY RULES MONDAY NIGHTS?
- WWF 60%
- WCW 40%

9. WHO WOULD WIN A NO-HOLDS-BARRED FIGHT BETWEEN ERIC BISCHOFF AND VINCE McMAHON JR.?
- McMahon 52%
- Bischoff 48%

10. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?
- Sable 29%
- Tammy Lynn Sytch 19%
- Kimberly 16%
- Chyna 9%
- Elizabeth 8%
- Francine 7%
- Debra McMichael 5%
- Stacy Carter 4%
- Dawn Marie 2%
- Others 1%

11. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST TV COMMENTATOR?
- Jim Ross 32%
- Mike Tenay 30%
- Jerry Lawler 11%
- Tony Schiavone 10%
- Joey Styles 7%
- Bobby Heenan 6%
- Others 4%

12. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Good 50%
- Mediocre 35%
- Poor 15%

13. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Good 57%
- Excellent 30%
- Mediocre 7%
- Poor 6%

14. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON IN WRESTLING?
- Vince McMahon 54%
- Eric Bischoff 33%
- Hulk Hogan 5%
- Steve Austin 3%
- Paul E. Dangerously 2%
- Others 3%

15. WHICH IS THE BEST WEEKLY WRESTLING SHOW ON TV?
- *Raw* 49%
- *Nitro* 47%
- ECW's weekly show 4%

16. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA?
- WCW World 52%
- WWF World 48%

17. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?
- Better 99%
- Worse 1%

18. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- X-Pac 13%
- Juventud Guerrera 12%
- D-Lo Brown 10%
- Billy Gunn 9%
- Jerry Lynn 7%
- Dave "Fit" Finlay 5%
- Others 44%

19. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Lex Luger 18%
- Undertaker 17%
- Bill Goldberg 14%
- Raven 13%
- Shane Douglas 10%
- Konnan 8%
- Reckless Youth 5%
- Others 15%

20. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?
- Mankind 38%
- Steve Austin 22%
- Bam Bam Bigelow 10%
- Mahoney 7%
- The Dudleys 5%
- Others 18%

21. DID THE WWF AND WCW EXPLOIT THE PERSONAL PROBLEMS OF HAWK AND SCOTT HALL TO IMPROVE RATINGS?
- Yes 94%
- No 6%

22. IF YOU WERE TOLD THAT ONLY ONE WRESTLING FEDERATION WOULD EXIST IN 10 YEARS, WHICH WOULD IT BE?
- WCW 52%
- WWF 48%

23. WHEN JESSE VENTURA COMPLETES HIS FOUR-YEAR TERM AS MINNESOTA GOVERNOR, WHAT WILL BE THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE JOB HE DID?
- Good 51%
- Mediocre 30%
- Excellent 13%
- Poor 6%

24. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTERVIEWS?
- Ric Flair 24%
- Steve Austin 22%
- Mankind 15%
- Vince McMahon 10%
- Rocky Maivia 8%
- Chris Jericho 6%
- Hollywood Hogan 5%
- Others 10%

25. WHO IS THE BEST MEXICAN

WRESTLER?
- Juventud Guerrera 34%
- Rey Misterio Jr. 31%
- Psicosis 18%
- Rayo de Jalisco Jr. 5%
- Abismo Negro 4%
- Dr. Wagner Jr. 3%
- Others 5%

26. WHO IS THE BEST JAPANESE WRESTLER?
- Mitsuharu Misawa 52%
- Keiji Muto 25%
- Kensuke Sasaki 10%
- Shinjiro Otani 4%
- Jushin Liger 4%
- Shinya Hashimoto 3%
- Hayabusa 3%

27. SHOULD THE WWF HAVE MORE "BRAWL FOR ALL" SERIES?
- No 82%
- Yes 18%

28. WILL THE NWA SUCCEED IN ITS PLANS TO BECOME A NATIONAL FORCE AGAIN?
- No 88%
- Yes 12%

29. WILL THE NWO ELITE LAST?
- No 63%
- Yes 37%

30. DO YOU THINK FANS WATCH OR ATTEND WWF SHOWS FOR WRESTLING, SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT, OR BOTH?
- Sports Entertainment 56%
- Both 30%
- Wrestling 14%

31. SHOULD ECW GET WORLD TITLE STATUS?
- Yes 51%
- No 49%

32. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?
- Bill Goldberg 32%
- Mankind 25%
- Scott Steiner 12%
- Ken Shamrock 9%
- Tazz 4%
- Giant 3%
- Others 15%

33. HAVE *THUNDER* AND *HEAT* BECOME PART OF YOUR WEEKLY WRESTLING SHOW WATCHING RITUAL?
- Yes 61%
- No 39%

34. AT WHAT AGE WOULD YOU ALLOW YOUR KID TO WATCH THE WWF?
- 15-18 .....38%
- 10-14 .....25%
- Any age 18%
- 6-9 .....16%
- No age 3%

35. DO YOU THINK FOX OR ANOTHER MAJOR MEDIA GROUP WILL SUCCESSFULLY FORM ANOTHER WRESTLING PROMOTION?
- No 82%
- Yes 18%

36. WHO IS WRESTLING'S MOST PROMISING NEW STAR?
- Billy Kidman 30%
- Val Venis 20%
- D-Lo Brown 14%
- Edge 11%
- Sable 8%
- Spike Dudley 5%
- Others 12%

37. SHOULD THREE-WAY TITLE MATCHES BE BANNED?
- No 56%
- Yes 44%

38. WHICH WAS THE BEST WWF PAY-PER-VIEW OF 1998?
- WrestleMania XIV 74%
- SummerSlam 17%
- Others 9%

39. WHICH WAS THE BEST WCW PAY-PER-VIEW OF 1998?
- Bash at the Beach 28%
- Starrcade 24%
- Halloween Havoc 17%
- Road Wild 12%
- Others 19%

40. WHICH WAS THE BEST ECW PAY-PER-VIEW OF 1998?
- Heatwave 49%
- Living Dangerously 21%
- Wrestlepalooza 18%
- November to Remember ..12%

41. WHICH IS THE BEST TOP-ROPE MANEUVER?
- Billy Kidman's shooting star press 29%
- Rob Van Dam's split-legged moonsault 21%
- Juventud Guerrera's 450 splash 15%
- Hayabusa's stardust press .13%
- Eddie Guerrero's frog splash ..9%
- Others 13%

42. WHO POSSESSES THE BEST HURACANRANA?
- Rey Misterio Jr. 54%
- Juventud Guerrera 22%
- Taka Michinoku 11%
- Dragon Kid 5%
- Others 8%

43. WHICH IS THE BEST POWER BOMB VARIATION?
- Chris Candido's top-rope power bomb 27%
- Jushin Liger's running Liger bomb 24%
- Kevin Nash's jackknife power bomb 16%
- Kenta Kobashi's orange bomb . 7%
- Others 26%

44. WHICH IS THE BEST ACE CRUSHER VARIATION?
- Steve Austin's Stone-Cold stunner 42%
- Johnny Ace's Ace crusher 34%
- Dallas Page's Diamond cutter . 11%
- Disco Inferno's chartbuster . .5%
- Mikey Whipwreck's Whippersnapper 4%
- Others 4%

45. WHICH IS THE BEST SUBMISSION HOLD?
- Tazz-mission 23%
- Mandible claw 20%
- Anklelock 19%
- Lion tamer 15%
- Steiner recliner 8%
- Figure-four leglock 7%
- Others 8%

46. WHICH IS THE BEST SUPLEX VARIATION?
- Mitsuharu Misawa's release tiger suplex 33%
- Chris Benoit's rolling German suplex 25%
- Tazz' dragon suplex 13%
- Curt Hennig's fisherman suplex 12%
- Others 17%

47. WHICH IS THE BEST DDT VARIATION?
- Chavo Guerrero Jr.'s tornado DDT 29%
- Mankind's double-arm DDT .24%
- Shinjiro Otani's springboard DDT 18%
- Gangrel's leaping DDT 8%
- Others 21%

48. WHICH IS THE BEST PILEDRIVER VARIATION?
- Kane's tombstone 35%
- Taka Michinoku's Michinoku driver 21%
- Undertaker's tombstone ..20%
- Bam Bam Bigelow's Greetings from Asbury Park 13%
- Juventud Guerrera's Juvi driver 9%
- Others 2%

49. WHICH IS THE RISKIEST MANEUVER?
- Space flying tiger drop ...42%
- Corkscrew plancha 22%
- Asai moonsault 16%
- Others 20%

50. WHO POSSESSES THE MOST EFFECTIVE FINISHER?
- Bill Goldberg (jackhammer) .21%
- Steve Austin (Stone-Cold stunner) ...20%
- Dallas Page (Diamond cutter) .18%
- Billy Kidman (shooting star press) ...15%
- Tazz (Tazz-mission) 11%
- Rocky Maivia (Rock bottom) .8%
- Others 7%

PWI POLL 2000

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Chris Benoit 18%
- Rob Van Dam 16%
- Jeff Hardy 15%
- Billy Kidman 14%
- Rey Misterio Jr. 9%
- X-Pac 6%
- Eddie Guerrero 5%
- Yoshihiro Tajiri 2%
- Others 15%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?
- Rob Van Dam 20%
- Chris Benoit 17%
- Rey Misterio Jr. 16%
- Sabu 14%
- Bill Goldberg 14%
- Mick Foley 7%
- Bret Hart 3%
- The Hardy Boyz 3%
- Others 6%

3. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST QUALITY WRESTLING?
- ECW 39%
- WCW 34%
- WWF 27%

4. WHICH IS THE PREMIER FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?
- WWF 59%
- WCW 35%
- ECW 6%

5. WOULD YOU JUDGE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?
- Status Quo 32%
- Promising 23%
- Cloudy 22%
- Shining 19%
- Hopeless 4%

6. WHO REALLY RULES MONDAY NIGHTS?
- WWF 77%
- WCW 23%

7. IF YOU COULD READ ONE BOOK BY ANY WRESTLING STAR (NOT PUBLISHED SO FAR), WHAT WOULD IT BE?
- Vince McMahon 37%
- Steve Austin 19%
- Bill Goldberg 17%
- The Rock 15%
- Tammy Lynn Sytch 4%
- Chyna 2%
- The Undertaker 1%
- Others 5%

8. IF YOU COULD PICK ONE WRESTLER TO HAVE RETIRE, WHOM WOULD IT BE?
- Mankind 34%
- Hulk Hogan 18%
- Ric Flair 16%
- Steve Austin 11%
- Tommy Dreamer 8%
- Terry Funk 7%
- The Undertaker 3%
- Others 3%

9. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?
- Torrie Wilson 28%
- Kimberly 16%
- Elizabeth 12%
- The Kat 11%
- Chyna 10%
- Dawn Marie 8%
- Francine 7%
- Ivory 4%
- Terri 3%
- Others 1%

10. WHO IS THE SEXIEST MALE WRESTLER?
- The Rock 31%
- Chris Jericho 20%
- Buff Bagwell 19%
- Edge 11%
- Test 5%
- Bret Hart 4%
- Val Venis 4%
- Bill Goldberg 2%
- Sting 2%
- Others 2%

11. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST TV COMMENTATOR?
- Jim Ross 34%
- Joey Styles 23%
- Jerry Lawler 21%
- Tony Schiavone 8%
- Michael Cole 6%
- Bobby Heenan 5%
- Joel Gertner 2%
- Others 1%

12. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Poor 32%
- Good 30%
- Mediocre 28%
- Excellent 10%

13. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON IN WRESTLING?
- Vince McMahon 59%
- Vince Russo 20%
- Paul Heyman 9%
- Bill Busch 5%
- Brad Siegel 3%
- Antonio Inoki 2%
- Others 2%

14. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?
- Mediocre 33%
- Poor 26%
- Good 22%
- Excellent 19%

15. WHICH IS THE BEST WEEKLY WRESTLING SHOW ON TV?
- *Raw* 39%
- *Nitro* 26%
- *Smackdown* 19%
- *ECW On TNN* 12%
- *Thunder* 3%
- Others 1%

16. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA?
- WWF World 42%
- WCW World 37%
- ECW World 21%

17. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?
- Better 85%
- Worse 15%

18. ARE GOLDBERG'S BEST DAYS AHEAD OF HIM?
- Yes 72%
- No 28%

19. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- The Hardy Boyz 25%
- Mike Awesome 23%
- Vader 12%
- The Big Show 4%
- Little Guido 3%
- Big Bossman 3%
- Others 30%

20. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?
- Kevin Nash 21%
- Sid Vicious 19%
- Mankind 16%
- Jushin Liger 8%
- Chyna 5%
- Rob Van Dam 5%
- Chris Jericho 4%
- The Rock 3%
- Test 3%
- Chris Benoit 1%
- Others 15%

21. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?
- Meng 23%
- The Acolytes 22%
- Rick Steiner 11%
- The Sandman 11%
- Chris Benoit 7%
- Atsushi Onita 7%
- Vader 4%
- Big Bossman 3%
- Others 12%

22. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTERVIEWS?
- The Rock 23%
- Vince McMahon 21%
- Triple-H 17%
- Steve Austin 16%
- Jeff Jarrett 7%
- Dallas Page 6%
- Shane Douglas 6%
- Chris Jericho 3%
- Others 1%

23. WHO IS THE BEST MEXICAN WRESTLER?
- Super Crazy 30%
- Rey Misterio Jr. 24%
- El Hijo del Santo 15%
- Juventud Guerrera 14%
- Psicosis 4%
- Dr. Wagner Jr. 3%
- Rayo de Jalisco Jr. 3%
- Others 7%

24. WHO IS THE BEST JAPANESE WRESTLER?
- Mitsuharu Misawa 54%
- Keiji Muto 21%
- Jushin Liger 7%
- Naoya Ogawa 7%
- H 3%
- Masa Chono 3%
- Genichiro Tenryu 2%

Masato Tanaka 1%
Others 2%

25. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?
Bill Goldberg 33%
Meng 16%
New Jack 12%
Steve Williams 12%
The Acolytes 11%
Vader 3%
Big Bossman 2%
Triple-H 2%
Naoya Ogawa 2%
Others 7%

26. WHO IS WRESTLING'S MOST PROMISING NEW STAR?
Rhino 25%
The Hardy Boyz 24%
Torrie Wilson 9%
Test 8%
Lash LeRoux 7%
Kurt Angle 6%
Evan Karagias 5%
Danny Doring 1%
Others 15%

27. WOULD YOU HAVE CONTINUED THE PPV AFTER OWEN HART DIED?
Yes 74%
No 26%

28. AT PRESS TIME, WWF STOCK WAS SELLING AT 14½. WHERE DO YOU SEE WWF STOCK A YEAR FROM NOW?
About the same 35%
Double 24%
Half what it is now 22%
Less than half 11%
Triple 4%

29. SHOULD HARDCORE WRESTLING BE OUTLAWED?
No 58%
Yes 42%

30. WILL WE EVER SEE A WRESTLERS' UNION?
No 52%
Yes 44%
Not sure 4%

31. HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR ECW TO BE ON PAR WITH WCW AND THE WWF?
3 to 5 years 27%
1 to 3 years 25%
Never 21%
5 to 10 years 17%
There now 10%

32. SHOULD ECW CHANGE NIGHTS ON TNN?
Yes 68%
No 32%

33. WHO DO YOU THINK WILL BE NUMBER ONE IN NEXT YEAR'S *"PWI* 500"?
Bill Goldberg 26%
The Rock 22%
Chris Benoit 20%
Rob Van Dam 15%
Bret Hart 5%
Vader 3%
Triple-H 3%
Others 6%

34. HAS WCW MADE A SMART MOVE BY CHANGING ITS MONDAY NIGHT TIMESLOT?
No 52%
Yes 48%

35. WILL THE WWF'S LOSS OF ADVERTISERS HAVE A GOOD LONG-TERM EFFECT ON WRESTLING IN GENERAL?
No 56%
Yes 44%

36. IS IT WRONG TO HAVE MEN vs. WOMEN MATCHES?
No 53%
Yes 47%

37. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT THE MONDAY RATINGS GAP TO BE A YEAR FROM NOW?
Significantly smaller 40%
Slightly smaller 28%
Slightly larger 24%
Significantly larger 8%

38. WHICH WAS THE BEST WWF PAY-PER-VIEW OF 1999?
WrestleMania XV 53%
St. Valentine's Day Massacre 16%
SummerSlam 11%
Royal Rumble 5%
Backlash 3%
Others 12%

39. WHICH WAS THE BEST WCW PAY-PER-VIEW OF 1999?
Halloween Havoc 33%
Mayhem 30%
Great American Bash 19%
Starrcade 7%
Others 11%

40. WHICH WAS THE BEST ECW PAY-PER-VIEW OF 1999?
Anarchy Rulz 35%
Living Dangerously 30%
Hardcore Heaven 19%
Guilty as Charged 10%
November to Remember 4%
Heatwave 2%

41. WHICH IS THE BEST TOP-ROPE MANEUVER?
Jeff Hardy's flipping senton .22%
Billy Kidman's shooting star press 17%
Rob Van Dam's five-star frog splash 16%
Mike Awesome's Awesome bomb 12%
Eddie Guerrero's frog splash .10%
Others 23%

42. WHAT IS THE BEST HURACANRANA VARIATION?
Dragon Kid's Dragonrana .23%
Rey Misterio Jr.'s springboard huracanrana 19%
Dragon Kid's blind huracanrana 15%
Super Delfin's Delfinlana .14%
Mike Quackenbush's backward huracanrana 8%
Others 21%

43. WHICH IS THE BEST POWER BOMB VARIATION?
Mike Awesome's Awesome bomb 26%
Jushin Liger's running Liger bomb 21%
Sid Vicious' power bomb .15%
Kevin Nash's power bomb 13%
Vader's high angle power bomb 7%
Others 18%

44. WHICH IS THE BEST PILEDRIVER VARIATION?
Kane's tombstone piledriver .25%
Jerry Lynn's cradle piledriver .18%
Juventud Guerrera's Juvi driver 17%
Taka Michinoku's Michinoku driver 15%
Undertaker's tombstone piledriver 8%
Others 17%

45. WHICH IS THE BEST SUPLEX VARIATION?
Mitsuharu Misawa's release tiger suplex 21%
The Rock's Rock bottom .20%
Chris Benoit's rolling German suplex 19%
Jun Akiyama's exploder '98 suplex 14%
Curt Hennig's fisherman suplex 10%
Others 16%

46. WHO HAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE MARTIAL ARTS KICKS?
Rob Van Dam 24%
X-Pac 21%
Yoshihiro Tajiri 18%
Jerry Flynn 14%
Toshiaki Kawada 11%
Steve Blackman 7%
Others 5%

47. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST IMPACT MANEUVER?
Goldberg's spear 32%
Triple-H's pedigree 16%
Chris Benoit's knife-edge chops 15%
Steve Williams' backdrop driver 11%
Akira Taue's choke-slam to the floor 9%
Others 17%

48. WHICH IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE SUBMISSION HOLD?
Scorpion deathlock/ sharpshooter 28%
Mandible claw 18%
Figure-four leglock 16%
Walls of Jericho 9%
Crippler crossface 8%
Tarantula 7%
Others 14%

49. WHICH IS THE RISKIEST MANEUVER?
Spaceman plancha into shooting star press 20%
Space flying tiger drop 18%
Twisting plancha 15%
Star dust press 13%
Cancun tornado moonsault 8%
Others 26%

50. WHO POSSESSES THE MOST EFFECTIVE FINISHER?
Goldberg (jackhammer) 19%
Steve Austin (Stone-Cold stunner) 17%
Rob Van Dam (five-star frog splash) 14%
Triple-H (pedigree) 13%
Mitsuharu Misawa (emerald erosion) 12%
Sting (scorpion deathlock) 10%
Others 15%

THE BUSINESS PAGE

By Harry Burkett

Bischoff's newest new era ... Eric Bischoff could be a leading candidate for *PWI's* Comeback of the Year Award next year, due to his dramatic return to power in WCW. He stayed cool during the Bill Busch regime, bided his time during the Vince Russo debacle, and put together a deal even after it looked like Time Warner had snubbed him for good.

Now WCW is Bischoff's again. It's difficult to say whether he has more or less power than during his previous stint. As WCW president, Bischoff bragged about "spending a billionaire's money" and boasted a budget that would make Vince McMahon blush even today. But he also had to deal with the Turner Sports hierarchy, which placed numerous limitations on his power.

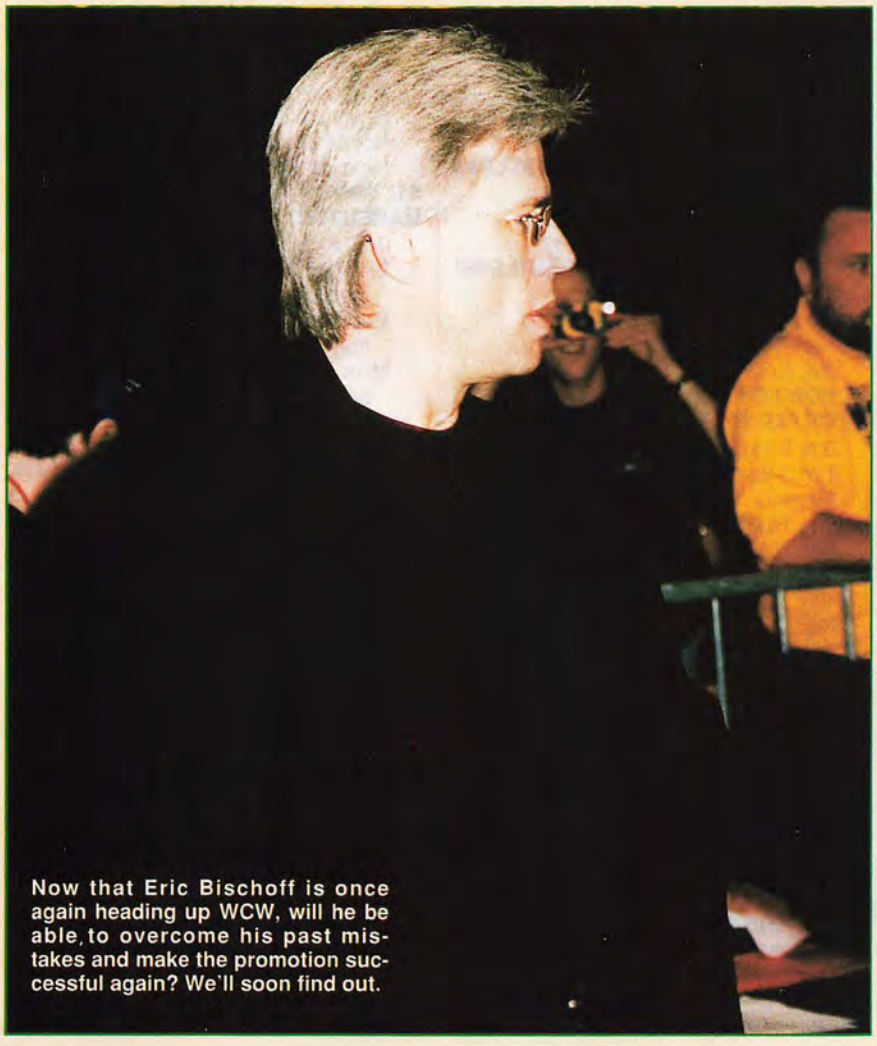
Since Bischoff spearheaded Fusient Media Ventures' negotiations to buy WCW, "Easy E" is in an enviable position. The venture-capitalist conglomerate, which specializes in resuscitating name-brand media companies, doesn't have any wrestling minds among its executives other than Bischoff. While Bischoff won't control the purse strings this time around, he will have considerable authority as the WCW entertainment president.

Brian Bedol and Stephen Greenberg, Bischoff's key partners in Fusient, founded the Classic Sports Network, which they sold to ESPN in 1997. WCW might relocate its offices from Atlanta to Los Angeles or New York, and there is talk about taping consecutive editions of *Nitro* (rather than go live every week) on a regular basis in either Las Vegas or Orlando.

The sale was still not official as of press time, since it will take some time for all the legal steps to be taken. Nonetheless, the change in ownership has spawned a new direction in WCW, with on-air CEO Ric Flair leading a group of heels, tentatively dubbed The Elite. Ironically, the change in direction began at one of the least-anticipated pay-per-views of all-time, Sin. Ratings for *Nitro* and *Thunder* since that pay-per-view have risen slightly. That should give Bischoff a solid foundation when he takes full control.

Thursday triple threat ... *Smackdown* is getting smacked around by television's two biggest powerhouses, *Survivor II* and *Friends.* There's been much hype surrounding the Thursday night rivalry between *Survivor* and *Friends,* but the once-formidable *Smackdown* might be paying the highest price. Although *Smackdown* earned a 4.9 the week previous to the debuts of *Survivor II* and the 40-minute *Friends,* one of its highest ratings ever, it plummeted to 4.0 on February 1. That occurred despite much hype on *Raw* concerning the special "Xtreme" edition of *Smackdown,* airing only two days before the XFL's debut.

At least some of *Smackdown's*



Now that Eric Bischoff is once again heading up WCW, will he be able to overcome his past mistakes and make the promotion successful again? We'll soon find out.

drop can be attributed to the fact that it didn't air in its regular timeslot in two of its major markets, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia.

Two other wrestling-related programs suffered similar fates. That night's edition of the WB's *Charmed,* starring Alyssa Milano and guest-starring several WCW wrestlers, scored only a 3.8. A repeat of A&E's *Biography* featuring Hulk Hogan earned only a 1.0.

Speaking of failures ... The biggest casualty on that ill-fated Thursday night was *Behind Closed Doors,* a magazine-type show starring Joan Lunden at 9 p.m. on A&E. Lunden did a 40-minute segment on wrestling and, specifically, the goings-on at the WCW Power Plant. The program did a horrible 0.6 rating. That shouldn't be a surprise considering the content.

The segment featured interviews with wrestlers who enjoyed great prominence during the Vince Russo regime, which was in control when the A&E cameras arrived. There was Kevin Nash, who said his favorite part of being a wrestler is "the paycheck he receives every two weeks." There were also interviews with David Flair and Paisley, both of whom are Power Plant graduates. No Bill Goldberg. No Ric Flair. Not even Booker T.

Lunden, who also attended WWF New York's grand opening last year, visited the Power Plant and accurately depicted the rigors involved with becoming a wrestler. There, she rehearsed an entertainment spot in which she would "hair-mare" Madusa during an edition of *Thunder.* Lunden did about 10 mares on Madusa as practice. During the actual *Thunder* show, the segment came across as unnecessary and stupid.

But Vince Russo must have felt good about the final product. During her commentary, Lunden described Russo as being partly responsible "for bringing wrestling to the public consciousness again." Her comments about Vince McMahon and Eric Bischoff must have been left on the cutting room floor.

EMLL on U.S. PPV ... Considering the vast exposure of Luchadores on WCW television in recent years, there's hope that EMLL's inaugural venture into the U.S. pay-per-view market will be successful. The event was to emanate from Arena Mexico in Mexico City in March. EMLL's pay-per-view debut actually occurred in March of last year, when it aired on Sky TV in Mexico. EMLL's success on Galavision is primarily responsible for its U.S. debut.

If the pay-per-view turns a profit in certain test markets, there's a possibility of nationwide releases of future events. AAA promoted the other major Lucha Libre pay-per-view in the U.S., titled When Worlds Collide, back in 1994. No plans were made for return engagements.

After years of only being able to read about their exploits, some American fans were finally able to watch legendary Mexican stars like El Hijo del Santo wrestle on an EMLL pay-per-view.

WWFE STOCKWATCH

(For the period of January 1-31)

30-Day High: 22 on January 31
30-Day Low: 16½ on January 2
52-Week High: 22½
52-Week Low: 9¾

WWFE stock rebounded steadily throughout January, with its 30-day low occurring on the first and its 30-day high occurring on the 31st. The entire New York Stock Exchange took a pummeling throughout December and early-January with news of a slowing economy and, in the case of WWFE, less discretionary income for most Americans.

By the end of the month, however, Wall Street shook free from some of its jitters due to a couple of 0.5 percent interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve Board. That, compounded with new rumblings for substantial tax relief on Capitol Hill, buoyed all stocks across the Big Board, including WWFE's.

It's been rumored that WWFE is looking to move its headquarters from Titan Towers in Stamford, Connecticut, to a yet-to-be-determined location, which would wind up being a very major expenditure for the company. The eight-story Titan Towers—with 93,000 square feet of office space—is becoming too small for the growing company, which now includes WWF, XFL, and Smackdown Records personnel.

Although there is a 38,000-square-foot television studio within five minutes of the building, executives are looking for one location to house business and television endeavors. Stamford is fighting hard to keep WWFE within city limits, but the company is also considering a move to New York.

THE MONDAY NIGHT NUMBERS (Note: Each ratings point represents 750,000 households.)

JANUARY 8

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	5Q	6Q	7Q	8Q	9Q	10Q	11Q	12Q	OR	Composite
Raw	—	—	—	—	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.5	5.3	5.2	5.1	5.2	5.7	4.8 (4.3*)
Nitro	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.6	1.8	1.8	1.5	1.5	—	—	—	—	—	2.1 (1.7*)

*Head-to-head composite

Tuesday Morning Quarterback: Nitro **took one of its worst head-to-head pummelings in recent history, mustering only a 1.7 head-to-head composite. Some WCW insiders blamed a two-week layoff for the poor showing, but the first hour's average rating was considerably higher. That proves that viewers didn't forget about *Nitro.* They simply decided that *Raw* was the show to watch. *Raw* scored an unusually high overrun rating for its main event. Scott Steiner and Jeff Jarrett have been part of so many inexplicable swerves, with and against each other, that *Nitro's* Steiner-Jarrett main event was bound to suffer.**

THE MONDAY NIGHT NUMBERS

JANUARY 15

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	5Q	6Q	7Q	8Q	9Q	10Q	11Q	12Q	OR	Composite
Raw	—	—	—	—	4.3	5.6	5.1	5.0	5.7	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.8	5.2 (5.0*)
Nitro	3.0	3.4	3.1	3.1	2.4	1.9	1.8	2.3	—	—	—	—	—	2.6 (2.1*)

Tuesday Morning Quarterback: Nitro's **ratings in the first hour were much higher than usual, possibly because viewers were curious about the identity of the mystery opponent at Sin the previous night. The numbers peaked in 2Q, during the mock funeral of Bill Goldberg. Does that mean fans like Goldberg that much, or the idea that he's gone? Regardless, those ratings should give hope to WCW's new entertainment president, Eric Bischoff. *Raw* countered with a very strong night of its own, doubling *Nitro's* overall rating again.**

THE MONDAY NIGHT NUMBERS

AUGUST 21

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	5Q	6Q	7Q	8Q	9Q	10Q	11Q	12Q	OR	Composite
Raw	—	—	—	—	5.0	5.0	5.7	5.8	6.2	5.8	5.7	5.6	5.7	5.6
Nitro	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.6	—	—	—	—	—	2.1

Tuesday Morning Quarterback: **Although TNT postponed *Nitro* until Tuesday to air Pretender 2001, *Raw* failed to surpass the 6.0 mark. It did, however, score 6.2 in 9Q. Unfortunately, TNT's decision to pre-empt *Nitro* for a made-for-cable movie that could be aired anytime stifled any momentum WCW gained at Sin and the unusually strong *Nitro* that followed. It's unlikely TNN will ever treat the WWF with such a cavalier attitude.**

THE MONDAY NIGHT NUMBERS

AUGUST 28

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	5Q	6Q	7Q	8Q	9Q	10Q	11Q	12Q	OR	Composite
Raw	—	—	—	—	4.1	4.8	5.3	5.8	6.2	5.7	5.8	5.5	5.5	5.4 (5.0*)
Nitro	2.4	2.6	2.8	3.1	3.0	2.3	2.1	2.1	—	—	—	—	—	2.6 (2.4*)

Tuesday Morning Quarterback: **The return of Dusty Rhodes and his confrontation with Ric Flair as *Raw* went on the air boosted *Nitro's* ratings to 3.1 and 3.0 in the fourth and fifth quarter-hours. The segment of *Raw* airing directly after *Nitro* is a consistently strong quarter-hour. Want proof? The Hardy Boyz vs. The Acolytes vs. RTC was *Raw's* big ratings winner of the night, scoring a 6.2. It even outscored the contract signing between Steve Austin and Triple-H, which earned a 5.8 in the previous segment. The Monday night war is still helping both companies.**

OTHER BIG THREE NETWORK & CABLE SHOWS

(For weeks ending January 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2001, respectively)

WWF

Smackdown **(UPN): 4.4, 4.8, 4.5, 4.9 (broadcast ratings)**
Sunday Night Heat **(MTV): 2.1, 2.2, 2.1, 1.1**
Livewire **(TNN): 1.2, 1.3, 1.2, 1.3**
Superstars **(TNN): 0.9, 0.9, 1.0, 1.3**

WCW

Thunder **(TBS): 1.8, 2.2, 2.2, 2.2**

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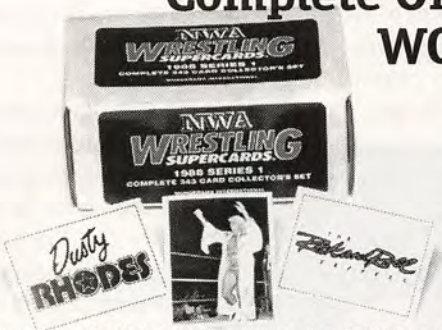

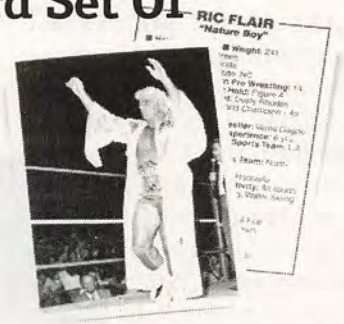

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the steel cage

By Dave Rosenbaum

IT'S ALL ABOUT ME. No, not me. Obviously, it's about everyone but me. Late again with my column, I received this e-mail from Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker at about 11 p.m. on a Monday night (Note to Dave: Get a life): "I desperately need 'Steel Cage' from you. Stuff to stay away from: XFL, ECW's future, Lionel Tate case." *Ugh!* That left wrestling! Ring stuff. No way!

Okay, so I was banned from writing about the XFL's stunning debut, which included punts to nowhere and cleavage shots to everywhere. I wasn't going to write about ECW's future, anyway, because who knows if ECW even has a future. As for the Tate case, I'm sick and tired of the story of the 13-year-old kid who was convicted of killing his playmate and whose lawyer tried to put wrestling on trial as a result. I live in South Florida, where the case is big, big news.

So what does that leave? Well, before I get to my main points, I'd like to say a few things about Missy Hyatt and Francine. Both of these women of wrestling have proudly boasted over the years that they've never taken their clothes off in the ring or for photographic purposes. To that, I say, "Huh?" Anybody who spends any time on the Internet these days has seen Francine and Missy posed with nothing more than hands covering their bare breasts. Excuse me, ladies, but hands are not clothes.

There's no question that some fans out there feel that the act of The Rock (shown against Christian) has grown stale. But is his referring to himself as "me" rather than "The Rock" really that big a development?

Now on to my first real subject: Recently, during a WWF *Raw Is War* broadcast, The Rock referred to himself as "me." This was such a stunning occurrence that a fan who posts comments at latestwrestlingnews.com was moved to write, "In just one word on *Raw,* The Rock redeemed himself from over a year of boring, predictable third grade insults he calls an 'interview.' When Rock referred to himself as 'me,' it added a new depth to his character. The great part about the new depth is that if the WWF works it properly, we'll be guessing for a few weeks as to what it really is."

This, to me, is an amazing thing. I find it hard to believe that just by referring to himself as "me" once in an interview, The Rock was able to add new depth to his character. I wish it was so easy for me to add new depth to my character.

I think what's relevant about this is that such a small utterance is now big news in wrestling. What this means, in my opinion, is that people are getting bored with The Rock and a little bored with the WWF. Unfortunately, WCW is not yet in position to capitalize on the fans' boredom (and neither is ECW, obviously).

What's going on here? *Uh-oh.* Could it really be ... the cycle? You know, the wrestling cycle, the one that happens every few decades or so, when fans go ga-ga over wrestling, turning it into the hottest thing on the planet. What happens is, after

Steve Austin's feud with Vince McMahon, along with publicity generated by Mike Tyson's involvement, helped lift the WWF from a down cycle. Dave Rosenbaum believes Vince McMahon will come up with more ideas to keep the WWF fresh in 2001 and beyond.

a few years, perhaps as many as four or five, things die down, and wrestling goes back to being only slightly more popular than pro hockey. This wrestling boom period lasted longer than the others, but it was bound to end eventually.

What if it ends in the death of two federations: ECW and WCW. The AWA couldn't outlast the boom period of the 1980s. Two casualties here could leave wrestling in bad position for a future boom period. Fortunately, WCW's future doesn't look so bleak anymore. Eric Bischoff and Fusient Media Ventures, the new owners of WCW, are committed to rebuilding the company.

When I bounce around the Internet, I see that even some rabid wrestling fans are getting bored with The Rock, bored with Triple-H, bored with Kurt Angle and Steve Austin, bored with the whole McMahon family. Is there anything to reverse their boredom, or is this simply human nature at work: People eventually get tired of everything.

Fortunately, wrestling has a large enough core of loyal fans to keep the business solid forever. They're the people who buy this magazine and can tell you when Hulk Hogan wrestled Ric Flair for the first time and can name every member of the Von Erich family and can recite the history of the Funks vs. Briscos feud.

These fans don't care that for the second year in a row, the WWF's action figure line won the British Association of Toy Retailers' Best Boys Toy of the Year Award (and you thought it would go to Britney Spears).

Also, I'm not counting out Vince McMahon. McMahon suffered through the early-1990s with the WWF, and suffered even more in the mid-1990s, when WCW temporarily became the top federation in North America. I think he'll do everything in his power to 1) Come up with new ideas; 2) Come up with new talent; 3) Come up with new ways to shock people.

Still, I can't help but wonder: Has the recent success of the XFL come at the WWF's expense? Has McMahon turned his attention to one product at the expense of another? Remember, one of the knocks against McMahon is that he's never been successful in any venture except wrestling. But he's a hands-on guy, and it's going to be hard for him to keep two big leagues flying high at the same time.

I don't know, but I'm just going to throw this question out there and see what happens. Maybe I can find out what you think: Will the WWF be the main victim of the XFL?

Uh-oh. I wasn't supposed to write about the XFL. □

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win lose or draw

By Harry Burkett

ECW Unified champion Rhino reached a verbal agreement with the WWF in February. What this means for the future of ECW is unclear, but it's certainly not good news for the extreme promotion.

AUTOPSIES APPEAL ONLY to coroners and journalists. There will be much speculation in the coming years pertaining to the demise of Extreme Championship Wrestling. For the record, owner Paul Heyman hasn't officially announced the shutdown of his company—and he might surprise us with a revamped model—but it's safe to say that ECW as we knew it is no more.

Rumors swirled during ECW's brief January swing through Arkansas and Missouri that the end was near. For those shows, ECW didn't bother booking many of its major stars in order to save on travel costs, certainly a sign of a promotion in trouble. Then there were more signs. Former ECW World champ Steve Corino started accepting bookings in the NWA. Others accepted more independent bookings. Heyman offered to go to bat for any of his wrestlers looking to sign with the WWF or WCW. Then the WWF signed former ECW World champion Justin Credible and came to verbal agreements with ECW Unified champion Rhino and former World champ Jerry Lynn. Yoshihiro Tajiri was also reported to be on the WWF's wish list.

For those people still trying to figure out why Verne Gagne retained Jake "The Milkman" Millman, but was too cheap to appease Hulk Hogan before his jump from the AWA to the WWF, there will be many questions asked about Paul Heyman's management decisions. Why didn't he delegate more authority inside ECW? Why did storylines on his TNN program run at a snail's pace? Why did *The Blair Witch Project* have better production values? Why was he so eager to destroy his relationship with TNN?

All those are valid questions, which should be put into perspective with one big question: How in the hell did Heyman manage to take a bingo-hall operation and transform it into one of the Big Three?

How many promoters could duplicate Heyman's record? Vince McMahon had the good fortune of acquiring a wrestling federation from his father, a company that was on decent financial footing and already enjoyed name-brand recognition. Eric Bischoff had the benefit of Ted Turner's massive bankroll, and now has the benefit of an investment group's bankroll. Heyman is the only entrepreneur to turn an independent promotion into a Big Three franchise.

While Heyman boasted extraordinary promotional and marketing expertise, he was inexperienced in backroom negotiations and corporate business dealings—and lacked a solid support team that could have pushed ECW fast and hard. During the past year, Heyman allegedly negotiated with USA Networks, Fox's FX, and ESPN2 to secure a national cable deal. His failure to secure a deal in a wrestling-hungry market is implausible and may be the reason that ECW finally goes out of business.

But does ECW need to go out of business? I don't know enough about its problems to register a sound

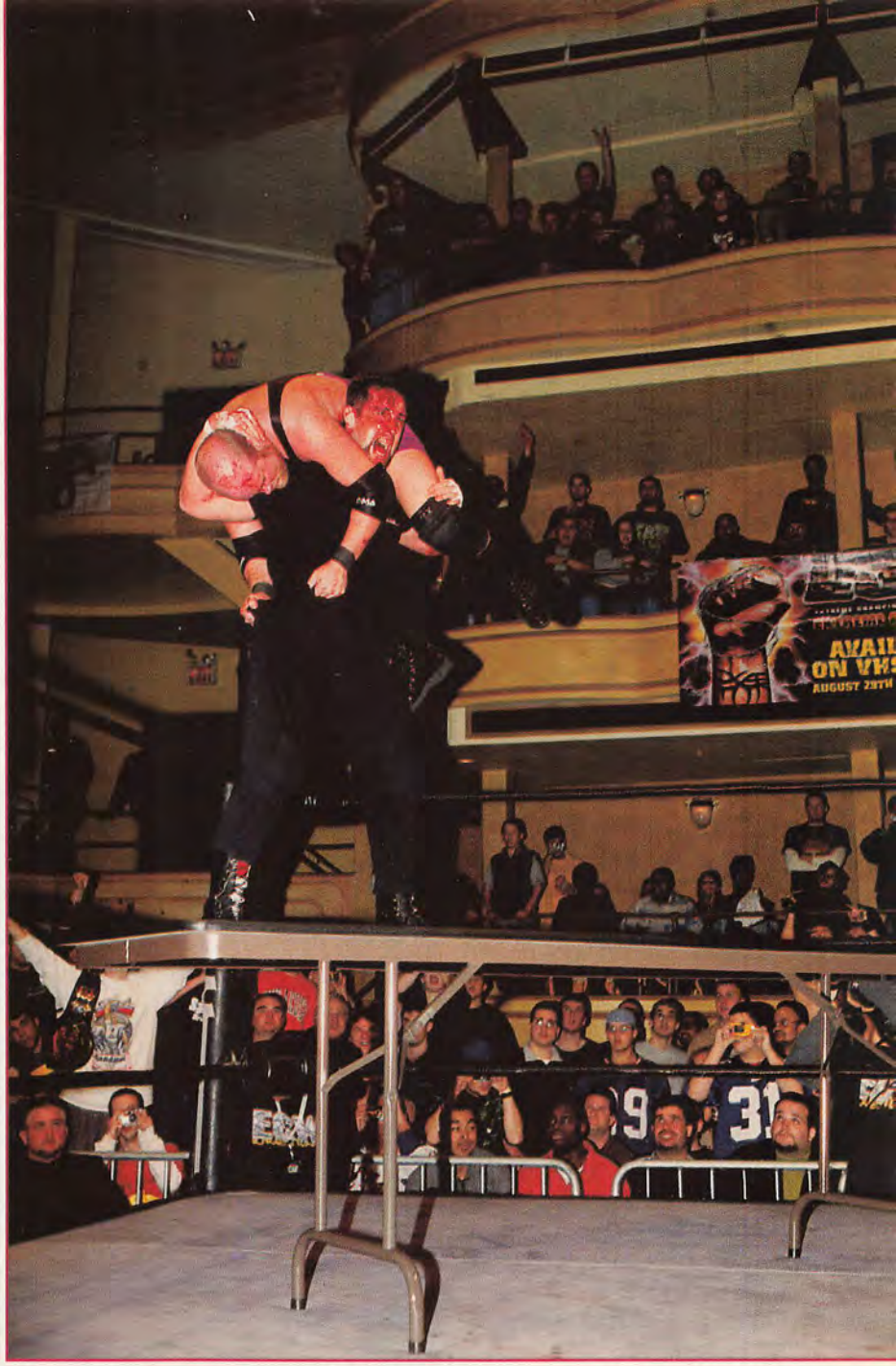
financial assessment, but I think ECW—as a company and a concept—can survive this huge crisis. If ECW doesn't need to file bankruptcy, but simply needs to reassess and restructure, there could be a future.

ECW fans haven't gone away. While there were usually more of them chanting "E-C-W! E-C-W!" at WWF shows than regularly attending ECW shows, there has always been an untapped audience out there. For years, there were more fans who wanted to watch ECW television programs than who could actually receive them. There were more fans who wanted to attend live events, but never had a chance because ECW didn't tour in their area.

Barely Legal, ECW's first pay-per-view, stunned industry insiders with a relatively high buy rate in 1997—without the benefit of a national cable presence or nationwide syndication. ECW's pay-per-view success preceded its national cable contract. By all logic and common sense, it should have happened the other way around.

Heyman could start at the beginning again, although I'd be hard-pressed to give him reasons why he should. ECW could return to its Philadelphia-New Jersey-New York roots and try to run shows much like its predecessors, Eastern Championship Wrestling and Tri-State Wrestling, did in the early-1990s.

Plenty of wrestlers need work. Matches featuring Tommy Dreamer, The Sandman, and C.W. Anderson could still pack fans into the ECW Arena. The company could return to its cult-like existence. If for no other reason, ECW could stay alive until the right cable deal is on the table. By that time, Anderson, Simon Diamond, and several other mid-carders would have the polish to carry the company to a higher level.



Tommy Dreamer prepares to put C.W. Anderson through a table from the second turnbuckle. Harry Burkett believes that matches between Dreamer and Anderson could keep fans interested in ECW if the promotion survives.

The UWF and World Class Wrestling had tremendous runs during the 1980s and were on the verge of receiving world title status before overexpansion—and talent raiding by the WWF—seemed to shut their doors overnight. The UWF billed itself as "the toughest federation in the world," and World Class' major distinction was that its heavyweight title could change hands on a disqualification.

Neither enjoyed a marketing and creative niche like ECW, which strived to be as different from the WWF and WCW as possible. The UWF and World Class pretended they were major leagues no different from the big guys. Trying to perpetuate that bluff was their downfall.

I hope Heyman and ECW don't go away completely. They helped revolutionize the business during the 1990s and, for as extreme and filthy as it sometimes was, I found it to be a promotion that respected tradition and its commitment to the fans. But the new ECW, if it ever comes about, must be more than Smoky Mountain with an attitude. It should continue searching for the cutting edge because, as wrestling moves to a two-party system again, there's a great danger that the current edge will become very dull.

If this is truly goodbye, I thank ECW for the memories. □

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER

By Dan Murphy

WHEN I READ that 13-year-old Lionel Tate had been convicted of first-degree murder, my first reaction was one of relief. And then I felt sick to my stomach … and disgusted with myself.

From all published accounts, Lionel wasn't unlike any other adolescent wrestling fan. He marveled at the athleticism he watched on Monday nights. Maybe he read the very magazine you're holding in your hands.

On one fateful day in July 1999, life as Lionel Tate knew it came to an end.

Lionel was playing with a six-year-old girl named Tiffany Eunick when he apparently began play wrestling with the girl. According to court documents, Lionel imitated some of his favorite pro wrestling moves on the little girl—and then something went wrong.

Tiffany died from injuries she sustained that day. The autopsy showed she suffered a fractured skull, lacerated liver, broken rib, internal hemorrhaging, and numerous cuts and bruises. In court, an expert for the prosecution said the injuries were comparable to the ones someone would suffer after falling from a three-story building. So maybe he did more than use a few wrestling moves on the girl. Only Lionel Tate knows for sure.

I don't use the word tragedy lightly, but this was a tragedy in every sense of the word. I can't help but imagine the horrible feeling that must have washed over Lionel when little Tiffany didn't get back up and he suddenly realized this wasn't a make-believe Monday night wrestling show anymore. So why in God's name did I feel that twinge of relief when the guilty verdict came down on January 25, 2001?

Though defense attorney Jim Lewis wanted The Rock to testify at the Lionel Tate murder trial, the judge would not allow it. Tate was found guilty of murdering a six-year-old girl, but wrestling wasn't really put on trial, as some feared it would be.

Because of the antics of defense attorney Jim Lewis, this wasn't just one boy on trial. Lewis was intent upon making the pro wrestling industry the true culprit in Tiffany Eunick's death.

Last summer, this case made national headlines when Lewis attempted to subpoena The Rock and Hulk Hogan as witnesses for the defense. The idea was to put these high-profile wrestlers on the witness stand and make them testify that they glamorize violence for impressionable kids, and that the punishment they seem to dish out on one another on TV isn't what it seems. The judge ultimately barred pro wrestlers from taking the stand and disallowed testimony from psychologists about how televised wrestling makes young fans more violent.

"The jury heard some about wrestling, but I don't think it was enough," Lewis told the Associated Press. "They did not hear from the experts, the psychologists, the media violence experts that could have persuaded this jury that Lionel had fallen into the trap that so many youngsters fall into."

So Lionel is guilty of murder and could face life in jail without parole under Florida's child abuse laws. Lionel's loss is a Pyrrhic victory for pro wrestling.

"Given the circumstances, the verdict is good for wrestling, but I don't know if I could call it a victory," Rob Van Dam told me. "I don't believe wrestling should ever have been brought into this in the first place."

I've been a wrestling fan for as long as I can remember. When I was Lionel's age, I was imitating my favorite wrestlers, too. I was backyard wrestling before backyard wrestlers got their own specials on MTV. And my younger sisters will be more than happy to vouch that I learned how to apply the cobra clutch, the figure-four leglock, and the STF by using them as sparring partners. Add an old black bathrobe covered with

Rob Van Dam believes a lot of kids get carried away when wrestling in their backyards today. "Kids need to be educated about the consequences of their actions," he told Dan Murphy.

glitter and I was Sid "The Blitzkrieg" Wayne, half of the Faces of Death with The Demon, otherwise known as my good buddy Mark.

Wrestling is near and dear to me, and it really hurts when I see people take things too far, when they risk their own safety and the safety of others "because they saw it on TV." And I'm not alone.

"When I was a kid, my friends and I would wrestle in the front yard or wherever, and we'd try to be like the guys we watched on TV," Van Dam said. "We would run slow motion into ropes that weren't really there, and when we got hit with a clothesline, we'd take these slow Fred Sanford-like soft bumps. Now kids think backyard wrestling is one step away from the pros. They're lighting each other on fire and using barbed wire and stuff. It's just crazy."

But Van Dam is one of the most high-impact wrestlers in the world. He puts his health and safety on the line with his daredevil tactics every time he steps in the ring, and the Van Daminator is a move that's often imitated by backyard wannabes. What does Van Dam say—how does he feel—when a young fan comes up to him and tells him that he does the Van Daminator just like RVD?

"I usually chalk it up as kids playing, and in a way, it's even a little flattering for me," Van Dam admitted. "If somebody were to get hurt, especially if they were seriously hurt, I'd feel more directly linked to it."

Wrestling is entertainment. Yes, it's athletic. Yes, it can be dangerous. Yes, for my money, it's the most exciting spectacle there is. But it's still entertainment. Sometimes the pros take the most brutal of piledrivers and kick out at two. That doesn't mean the kid down the street will. And it doesn't mean it's okay for you to try, either.

I don't want to get up on a soapbox here. After all, I did all of this stuff when I was younger, too. But I understood how dangerous the moves could be. I knew the difference between TV and my backyard.

"It wasn't wrestling that killed that girl. It wasn't a wrestler who did it or told the kid to hurt the girl. It was bad judgment on Lionel's part," Van Dam said. "Kids need to be educated about the consequences of their actions so that they understand what they're doing."

Lionel Tate was to be sentenced in March. His fate will be known by the time you read this. I just hope others learn from his tragic experience.

"There are no winners in this case," prosecutor Ken Padowitz said. "There are only losers."

It's a hard loss to accept. □

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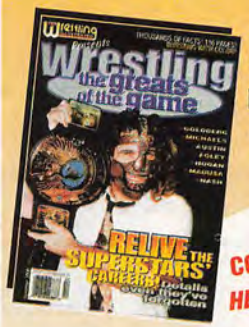

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Sept. 1983: Zbyszko vs. Rich: Can The National Title Survive This Brutal Tug Of War? Also: Andre-Kamala, Piper-Valentine, Michael Hayes.

Nov. 1983: We Sent Hulk Hogan To Cover Bockwinkel vs. Wahoo ... And All Hell Broke Loose! Also: James J. Dillon, Race-Kevin Von Erich, Paul Ellering, Reed-JYD.

April 1984: Rick Steamboat Quits Wrestling! The *Real* Story Behind His Most Painful Decision. Also: Masked Superstar-Mulligan, Adams-Garvin, Barry Windham, Ric Flair.

July 1984: Ric Flair Brings The World Title To The New York Area: A Night Of Champions At The Meadowlands. Also: Martel-Bravo, Mr. Wrestling II, Jumbo Tsuruta.

Aug. 1984: Junkyard Dog Joins Jim Valiant's Boogie Woogie Brigade. Also: Steve O-Zbyszko, Magnum-Wrestling II, Austin Idol, Sugar-Spoiler.

Sept. 1984: Rick Martel Dethrones Jumbo Tsuruta: Finally, And AWA Champion To Be Proud Of. Also: Brody-LeDuc, Iron Sheik, Kerry Von Erich, Rock 'n' Roll Express.

Oct. 1984: Collision Of The Florida Musclemen: Can Billy Jack Squeeze Superstar Graham Out Of Wrestling? Also: Road Warriors, Flair-Steamboat, Eddie Gilbert, Orndorff & Shultz-Atlas & Johnson.

Nov. 1984: Dusty Rhodes: Champion Of Champions ... And Still The Lord Of The Ring. Also: Rich-Gilbert, Gino Hernandez, Road Warriors, JYD-Reed.

Dec. 1984: How Hulkamania Trampled Big John Studd. Also: Road Warriors, Magnum T.A., Wahoo McDaniel, Sullivan-Rhodes.

March 1985: He's Back And Better Than Ever: Backlund-A-Mania Is Sweeping The Nation! Also: Koloffs, Billy Jack, Von Erichs-Devastation Inc.

June 1985: Sgt. Slaughter Topples Ric Flair—So Why Isn't He Champion? Also: Ellering & Road Warriors, Koloffs & Khrushchev-Von Erichs, Kevin Von Erich, Andre & JYD.

Sept. 1985: A Psychologist Examines "Rowdy" Roddy Piper! Is He As Crazy As You Think He Is? Also: Magnum-Blanchard, Fantastics, Ric Flair, Gagne & Sammartino.

Jan. 1986: Rick Steamboat vs. Magnificent Muraco: The Volacano Rumbles. Also: Warriors & Ellering, Mike Von Erich, Jake Roberts, Koloff & Khrushchev-Rock 'n' Rolls.

March 1986: Barry Windham & Mike Rotundo: Will Their Reunion Spell Disaster For Kendall Windham? Also: Studd-Hillbilly, Rick Rude, Jerry Lawler, Russians-Road Warriors.

April 1986: Starrcade's Over, But The Feud Rages On: Dusty Rhodes And Ric Flair Cannot Survive '86! Also: Andre-Heenan, Bill Watts, Scott Hall, Lance Von Erich.

June 1986: Barry Windham's NWA Mission: Humiliate Ric Flair! Also: Nord-Road Warriors, British Bulldogs, Lance Von Erich-One Man Gang, Tully Blanchard.

July 1986: All-American Special Issue: Sgt. Slaughter, Hulk Hogan, Magnum T.A. Also: Ivan Koloff, Rude-Lance Von Erich.

Aug. 1986: WrestleMania 2: Hulk Hogan's Night Of Redemption. Also: Jim & Ron Garvin, Steve Williams, Rick Martel, Sir Oliver Humperdink.

Sept. 1986: Dusty Rhodes & Magnum T.A.: America's Team Is Not Out For Glory ... It's Out For Revenge! Also: Andre-Hogan, Chris Adams, Barry Windham, Scott Hall.

Oct. 1986: The NWA Championship Sinks To A New Low: Ric Flair Needs 10 Thugs To Defeat Lex Luger! Also: Road Warriors, Randy Savage, Verne Gagne, Fantastics-Sheepherders.

Nov. 1986: Paul Ellering's Own Story: "How My Road Warriors Made Dusty Rhodes NWA Champion." Also: Adams-Rude, British Bulldogs, Bockwinkel-Hansen, Bill Watts.

Dec. 1986: Rock 'n' Roll Revival: Morton And Gibson Regain The NWA World Tag Title! Also: Lex Luger, Hogan-Adonis, Hall-DeBeers, Baby Doll.

Jan. 1987: The New Roddy Piper: Why The Fans Love Him ... But Why They Should Hate Him! Also: Terry Taylor, Magnum T.A., Rude-Flair, Bam Bam Bigelow.

Feb. 1987: Hogan, Piper, Orndorff: The WWF's Hate Triangle. Also: Terry Taylor, Ric Flair, Midnight Rockers, Kevin Von Erich.

March 1987: Happy Anniversary, Hulk Hogan! The WWF Champion Celebrates Three Years At The Top. Also: Ric Flair, Missy-Gilbert, Lex Luger, Bulldogs, Koloffs.

April 1987: Steamboat & Windham: Manny Happy Returns! Also: Paul Ellering, Hacksaw Duggan, prospects.

May 1987: Barry Windham's Warning To Lex Luger: "Keep Away From The Four Horsemen." Also: Steamboat-Savage, Hogan-Andre, Freebirds & Sunshine, Williams-OMG, Midnight Rockers.

June 1987: Nikita Koloff's Mission: Saddle The Horsemen And Trample Lex Luger! Also: Roddy Piper, Adams & Taylor, Bruiser Brody, Scott Hall.

July 1987: Exclusive Ringside Reports: WrestleMania III Makes History! Also: Midnight Rockers, Mike Rotundo, Danny Davis, Ted DiBiase.

Aug. 1987: The Superpowers' Super Victory: Dusty Rhodes & Nikita Koloff Win The Crockett Cup. Also: Hulk Hogan, Lane & Cornette, Mike Von Erich, Adams & Taylor.

Sept. 1987: Hulk Hogan Defeats Harley Race: How Fate Took The Greatness Out Of This Violent Feud. Also: New Breed-R&R Express, Rich & Idol, Honky Tonk Man, Eddie Gilbert.

Oct. 1987: The Rock 'n' Roll Express Win Their Fourth NWA Title: Also: Hogan-Bigelow, Rhodes-Blanchard, scaffold, Kevin Sullivan.

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Dec. 1987: Rhodes Challenges Luger: Will Dusty's U.S. Title Hopes Split The Superpowers? Also: Hayes-Bubba, Magnum T.A., Randy Savage, Al Perez.

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Aug. 1988: What Randy Savage Must Do To Escape The Shadow Of Hulk Hogan. Also: Hyatt-Gilbert, Sting, Michael Hayes, Honky Tonk.

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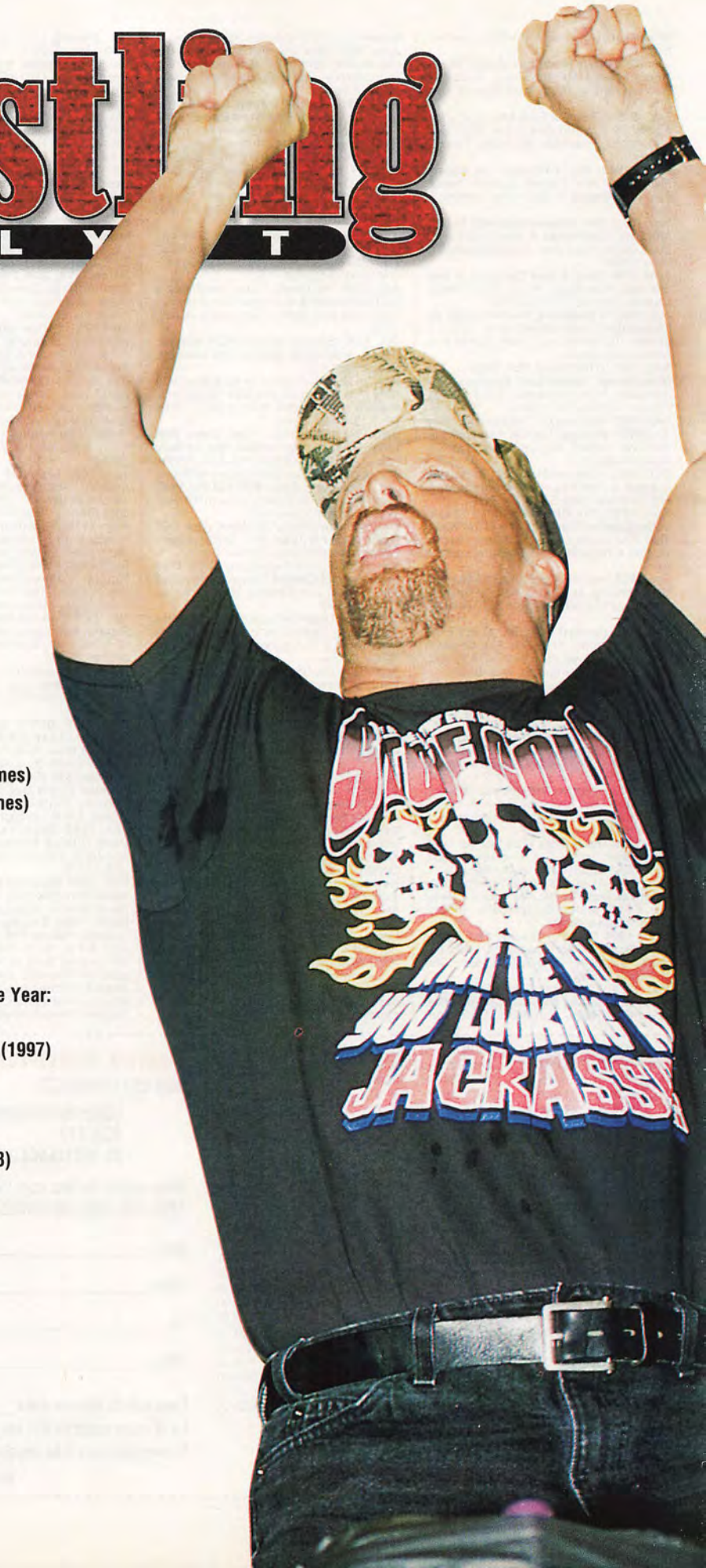
Wrestling ANALYST

STEVE AUSTIN

Years Pro: 11
Size: 6'2", 252
"*PWI* 500" Listings: 2000—NL
1999—1
1998—1
1997—3
1996—22
1995—43
1994—6
1993—23
1992—10
1991—31
Titles: WWF World (4 times)
WWF Intercontinental (2 times)
WWF World tag team (3 times)
WCW United States
WCW World tag team
WCW TV (2 times)
***PWI* Awards:** Feud of the Year:
Winner (1998, 1999)
1st runner-up (1990, 1997)
Inspirational Wrestler of the Year:
1st runner-up (1997, 1998)
Match of the Year: Winner (1997)
1st runner-up (1998)
2nd runner-up (1999)
3rd runner-up (1999)
Most Popular: Winner (1998)
1st runner-up (1997, 1999)
Rookie of the Year:
Winner (1990)
Tag Team of the Year:
1st runner-up (1993)
Wrestler of the Year:
Winner (1998, 1999)
1st runner-up (1997)



Photos by Vern Verna & Duane Long

① **Nothing makes Steve Austin happier than pummeling a man he hates—say Triple-H—and leaving him laying bloody on the mat. "Stone-Cold" may not be overwhelmingly powerful or quick, but he's one hell of a brawler.**

THE NUMBERS

Offense (9.5): Austin's score dropped slightly from the 10.0 he earned from *The Wrestling Analyst* three years ago. His energy level in the ring remains extremely high, but two weaknesses have become glaring. His neck is still very vulnerable, and his brawls, both in the ring and through the crowd, are predictable.

Defense (9.0): His punching and stomping remains an effective way to reverse a match's momentum. A simple Irish whip can mean disaster for his opponent, who can find himself on the receiving end of a Lou Thesz press, a flurry of punches, and even a pin attempt at the same time. He's also quite adept at reversing opponent's attempts at Irish whips and quickly turning them into stunners.

Experience (10.0): The slight loss in offensive effectiveness is compensated for by Austin's increased experience. Not only does "Stone-Cold" have more than a decade of ring experience, but nearly five of those years of experience have been accrued in the WWF, where he's learned how to stay on top of the entire business.

Conditioning (9.0): Austin is in better physical condition than he was when he was run over at Survivor Series '99. An accumulation of nagging injuries and his constant neck and back problems—in addition to countless public appearances—took its toll, but his spinal surgery seems to have extended his career rather than shortened it. For the most part, the beer gut is gone as well.

Science (9.0): His underestimated scientific skills, which he displayed against Rick Steamboat and Chris Adams in the past, have come to the fore against Chris Benoit and WWF champ Kurt Angle. Nearly 20 suplexes were executed by either Austin or Angle during a recent match on *Raw*.

Stamina (9.5): Could Austin survive an "Ironman" match at this point in his career? Conventional wisdom says no, but don't bet against it. He has delivered solid 15- to 20-minute main events on *Raw*, *Smackdown*, and pay-per-views without resorting to many extended rest holds, such as headlocks and chinlocks.

Power (8.0): While Austin's strength hasn't diminished, the power of his primary rivals is greater. The Rock and Triple-H, for example, are much stronger than Bret Hart and Shawn Michaels were. His neck and back problems prevent him from using a lot of power bombs and back bodydrops.

Speed (8.0): The brace on Austin's left knee always indicated mobility problems, but for part of 1999 and ever since his 2000 return, he has worn a brace on his right knee as well. The reflexive use of his legs is limited, which is why smaller foes such as Angle and Benoit are so tough.

Ability To Absorb Punishment (10.0): Although he enters the ring with a few physical handicaps, Austin has never used them as an excuse to surrender a match. His WrestleMania XIII "I Quit" match against Bret Hart and his SummerSlam '97 match against Owen Hart cemented his gutsy legend.

Quality Of Opposition (9.5): Austin hasn't dealt with the rigors of defending the WWF title on a nightly basis for quite a while. However, the fact that his main enemies, the McMahons, often handpick his opponents (and still can't keep him down) proves he is ready for anything at any time.

THE ANALYSIS

Repertoire: Austin is dispelling the notion that he's a one-move wonder. The Stone-Cold stunner has earned him many victories and has been an invaluable asset in sneak-attacks, but that finisher is only one move in an arsenal that includes the Thesz press, the jawbreaker, the double-underhook suplex, and the spinning toehold.

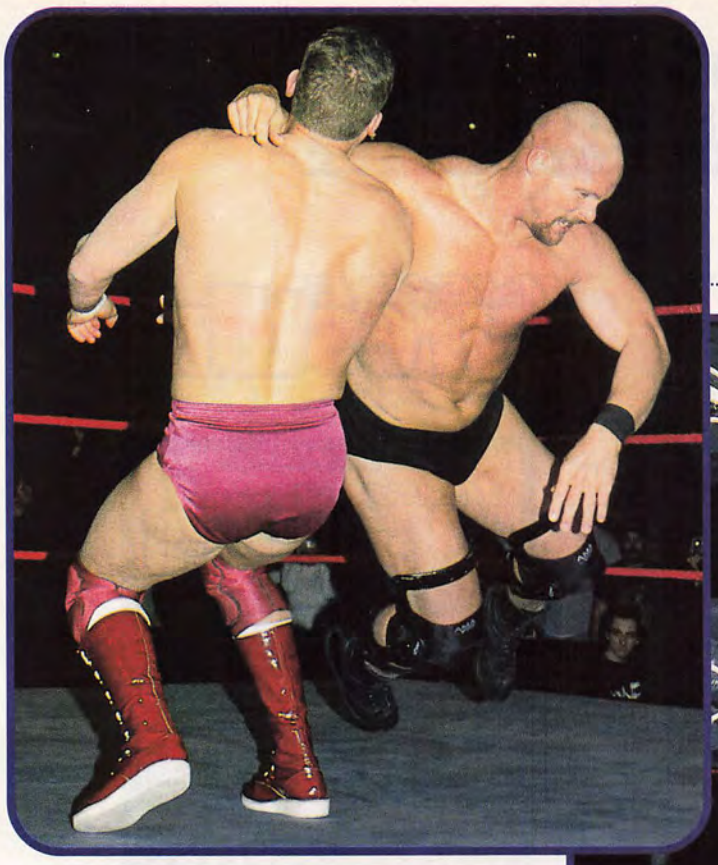
Strengths: "Stone-Cold" never gets lazy on top. Austin could have kept drinking Natural Lights, which would have let his stomach get flabbier, but he hit the gym and whipped himself into fine shape. His well-documented injuries and unconditional fan approval would be plausible excuses for being anything less than top-notch. Lesser men would be fat and happy. Austin always wants more.

Weaknesses: Unfortunately, it's tough for Austin to do anything about his biggest weaknesses. Austin's spinal surgery of a year ago, which fused part of his hip bone into his neck, has made his back and neck much stronger than before. But they will always be targets. His knees are the more serious problem because reconstructive surgery will never bring back his healthy joints.

Defining Career Moment: Analyses of Austin may come and go, and even his physical skills might change, but no moment will define his career like this one: Austin defeating Owen Hart for the Intercontinental title at SummerSlam '97. Hart had piledriven Austin's head into the canvas, rendering "Stone-Cold" paralyzed for about a minute. Yet Austin recovered to pin Hart.

Future: Austin was one WWF title reign short of The Rock's five at press time, and there's no doubt "Stone-Cold" wants to even the score. He'd like to beat Kurt Angle or Triple-H for the title, then have a successful defense against The Rock. Will Austin turn heel to go after The Rock? So far, he doesn't seem anxious to lose his fan support.

② **Those who said Austin no longer had *any* scientific skills had to think again after watching him battle Chris Benoit this winter. He had "The Crippler" struggling to counter *his* holds and managed to methodically wear down Benoit's arm.**



③ Attacking Austin's vulnerable neck is a good strategy to employ against him. As William Regal discovered, however, that's hard to do when Austin attacks so aggressively and relentlessly. He hasn't been at all tentative since returning to action.

④ Is a heel turn for "Stone-Cold" in the works? A lot of people have been wondering that for a long time. But it seems no matter what Austin does—including humiliating referees—the masses refuse to hate him.

this month in...

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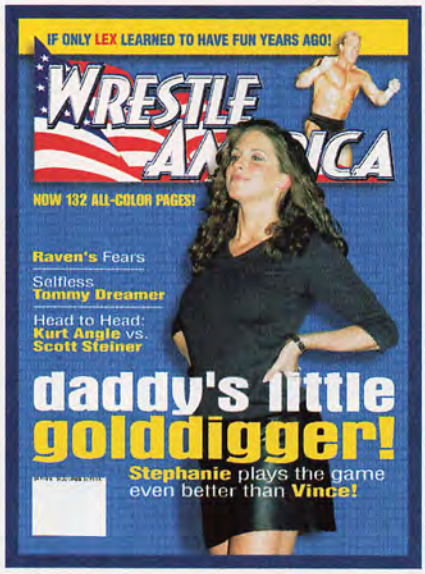
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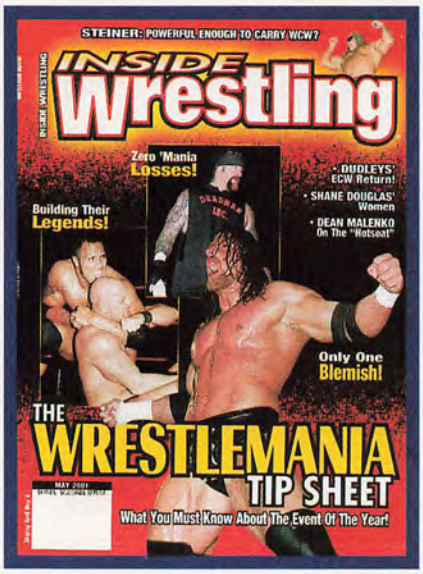
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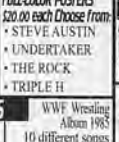

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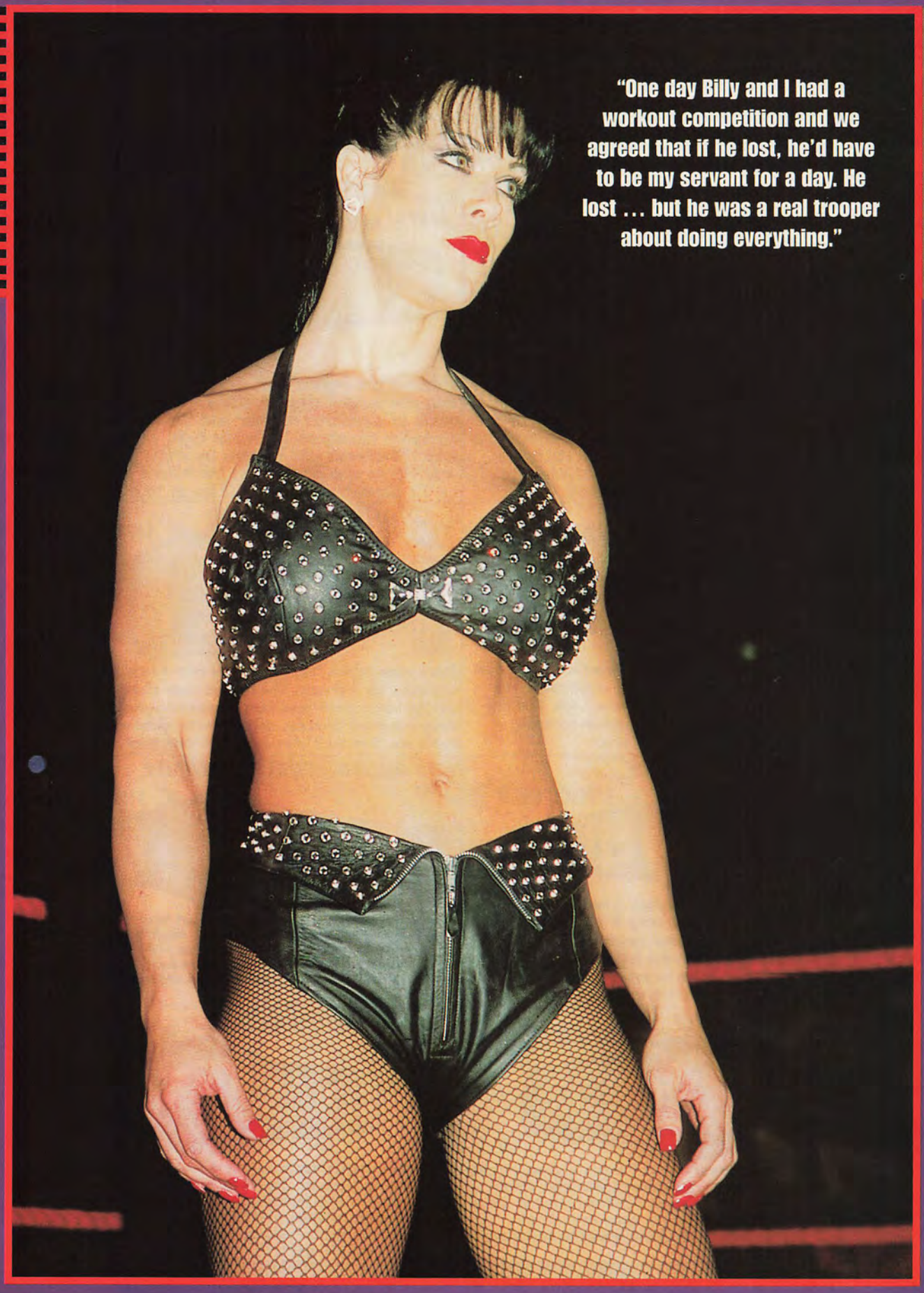


"One day Billy and I had a workout competition and we agreed that if he lost, he'd have to be my servant for a day. He lost … but he was a real trooper about doing everything."

12 Questions

You're at the airport. You see your favorite wrestler relaxing in one of the terminals. You rush up to him or her as questions fill your excited mind. There are certain things you just *have* to know about this person. Well, these are the 12 questions you'd *never* think of asking

WITH CHYNA

What's the funniest thing you've ever seen Vince McMahon do?

Whenever he tries to dance when he hears rap music or some other music start playing, it's hysterical. When people say white men can't dance, it's definitely true of him.

What celebrity do you look at and say, "How the hell did this person ever become a star?"

Brian Bosworth.

What's the best practical joke someone's ever played on you?

There haven't been too many. Sometimes one of the guys will keep calling my hotel room and acting like an obsessed fan.

What person do you hope you never, ever see naked?

Fat Bastard from *Austin Powers*

You have a choice between that naked Rich guy from the first *Survivor,* Fran Drescher, and Jim Hellwig to live with on a deserted island for the rest of your life. Which one would you pick and why?

I'd have to go with Rich. He seemed nice enough when we did the MTV Awards together. He didn't annoy me or bother me. He was a little pompous. I was so excited just to be there and he acted real cool and calm among all the celebrities, like he belonged there.

What was your first reaction when you finally saw a printed copy of your book?

I just smiled from ear to ear.

Who's the one person in your life you really don't want to make angry and why?

It'd have to be Vince McMahon, because he's my boss and I'd get fired.

What's the strangest question a fan has ever asked you?

I get a lot of the standard stuff you'd expect, like "Will you marry me?" or "How much can you bench?" or "Can you flex for me?" or "Wanna arm-wrestle me?"

What's your favorite Billy Gunn nickname—The One, Billy G, Mr. Ass, or Rockabilly?

Actually, I'd have to say it's either Billy Bob or Slave Boy. One day Billy and I had a workout competition and we agreed that if he lost, he'd have to be my servant for a day. He lost, so I made him carry my luggage, run all over the building to get me Diet Cokes, tie my shoes, and all this other stuff. But he was a real trooper about doing everything.

What food did you try once, only to swear you would never eat again?

Eel. It has a bad taste, a bad smell, and a horrible texture.

What's the most embarrassing thing that's ever happened to you in the ring?

My top popped off while I was punching Steve Austin during a house show once. The strap just popped right off, so I just had to cover up and run all the way to the back and put on a new top, then run back out to the ring.

You have a hammer, a midget, and a roulette wheel. What are your plans for the evening?

A night of sheer torture for the midget. □

For The Guys ...

PAISLEY

BEST FEATURE ...
Her booty

WHAT GUY WOULDN'T LIKE TO SEE HER DRESSED UP AS ...
A *Baywatch* cast member

FACE IT, MEN CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF HER ...
Come-hither smile

BUT WATCH OUT FOR THAT ...
Saucy, bossy attitude. This girl likes to take charge, fellas

SHE'D BE GREAT IN THIS TV OR MOVIE ROLE ...
Whitney Houston's role in *The Bodyguard*

IF SHE WEREN'T INVOLVED IN WRESTLING, WE COULD SEE HER SUCCEEDING AS ...
A Laker girl. She'd definitely get a rise out of Jack Nicholson

ONE THING SHE COULD STAND TO IMPROVE UPON ON IS ...
Her taste in men's hairstyles. What is it about Kwee Wee, anyway?

LITTLE-KNOWN FACT ...
She's a former Miss Black America

OVERHEARD AT RINGSIDE ...
"Wasn't she in that *Purple Rain* movie with Prince about 15 years ago?"

For The Ladies . . .

LANCE STORM

BEST FEATURE ...
His well-developed pectoral muscles

WHAT WOMAN WOULDN'T LIKE TO SEE HIM DRESSED AS ...
A member of the Royal Canadian Mounties

FACE IT, LADIES CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF HIS ...
Dry wit. There's just something so sexy about a serious man

BUT WATCH OUT FOR THAT ...
Xenophobia. But if he's so anti-American, why is he the only member of Team Canada from Canada?

HE'D BE GREAT IN THIS TV OR MOVIE PART ...
The David Puddy character from *Seinfeld*

IF HE WEREN'T INVOLVED IN WRESTLING, WE COULD SEE HIM SUCCEEDING AS ...
A personal trainer. He'd surely steal some clientele away from Richard Simmons

ONE THING HE COULD STAND TO IMPROVE UPON IS ...
His choice in tag team partners. Chris Jericho, Chris Candido, Justin Credible, and Mike Awesome are all loudmouths whose personalities have never seemed to mesh with his

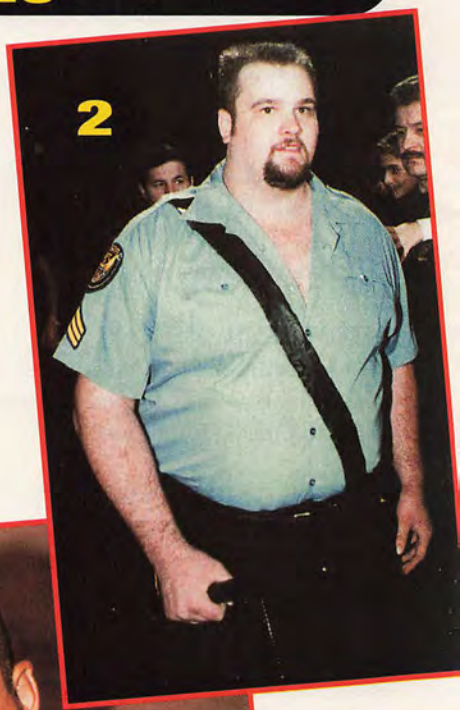
LITTLE-KNOWN FACT ...
Was an avid volleyball player in his youth

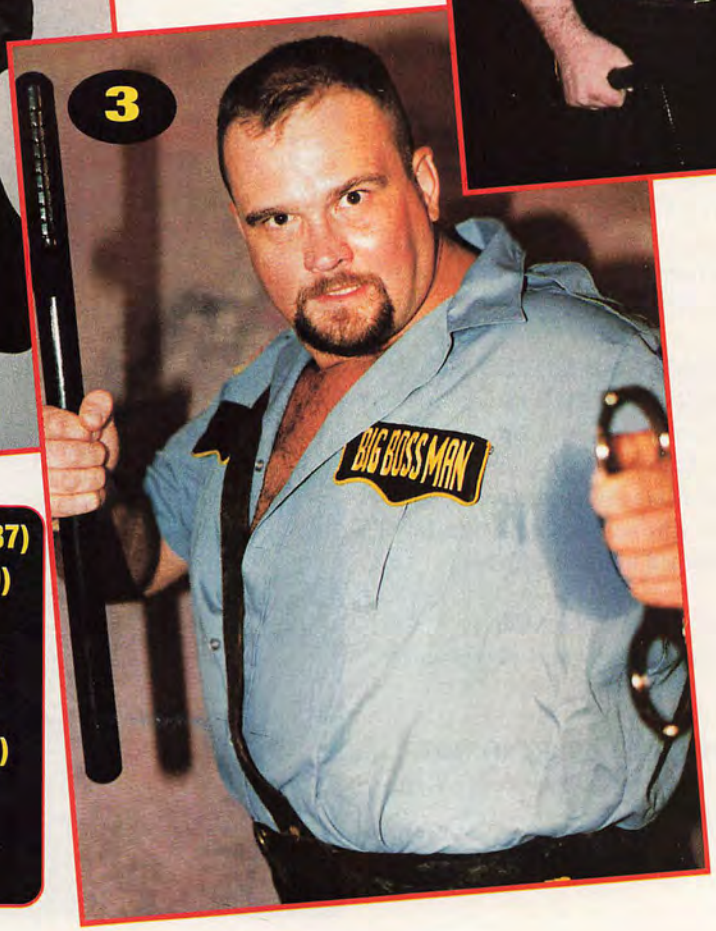
OVERHEARD AT RINGSIDE ...
"What's so great about being Canadian anyway?"

Through the Years

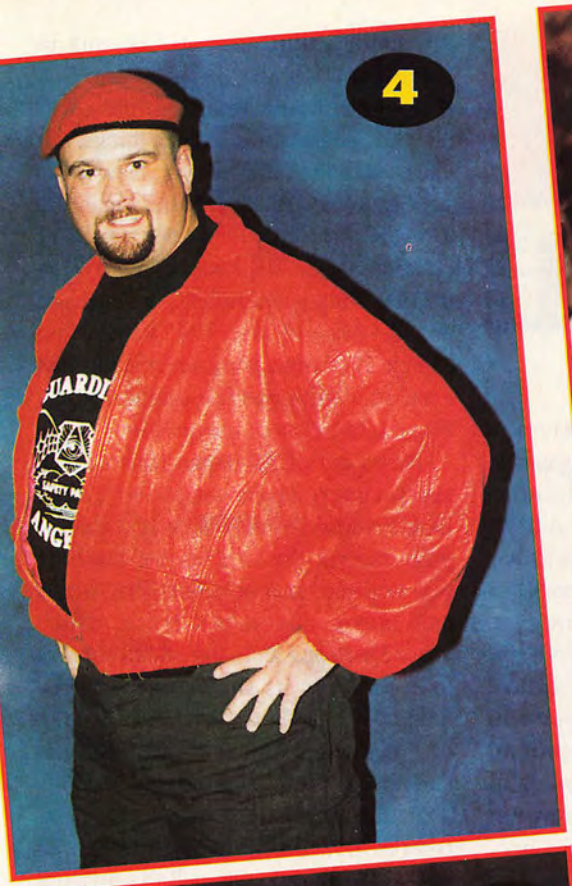
It's amazing how drastically certain superstars change their looks over the years. A change in hair color or hairstyle here, a new ring outfit there, a few more tattoos here *and* there, or the mother of all changes ... the total gimmick overhaul. Every month, *PWI* will show you just how much one of your favorites has transformed himself. Yeah, it really is the same guy in all these photos!

THE BIG BOSSMAN FILES





1-All decked out as Big Bubba Rogers (1987)
2-And from Cobb County, Georgia ... (1989)
3-Don't cross the Boss(man) (1993)
4-Keepin' the streets safe for us all (1994)
5-Not exactly *GQ* material (1995)
6-Those look like some tough dukes (1996)
7-Ray Traylor don't need no stinkin' gimmick! (1997)
8-Hardcore, title or no title (1999)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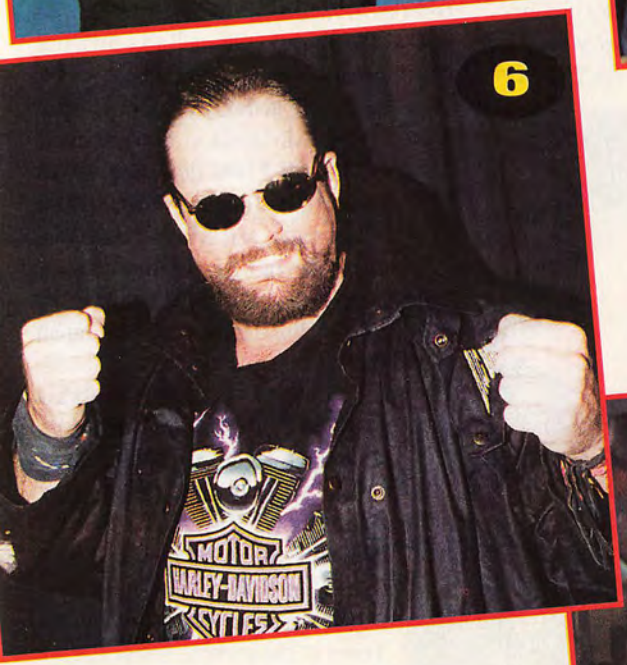
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the JAPAN REPORT

By Mike Spillane

"TOUGH LUCK" WAS a phrase most *puroresu* fans used to associate with **Toshiaki Kawada**, top star of All-Japan Pro Wrestling. For so long, it seemed Kawada could never catch a break. He was plagued by injuries at the most inopportune times and was often the victim of backstage politics. Now, however, people tend to associate "tough luck" more with NOAH superstar **Kenta Kobashi**, whose career is in serious jeopardy for the very first time.

Kobashi has amassed a massive fan following by using a hard-hitting, innovative style that has made him one of the finest heavyweight wrestlers in the world. For years, Kobashi was known not only for his punishing strikes and unusual power bomb variations, but also his graceful moonsault from the top turnbuckle. Years of using so many high-risk moves cost Kobashi dearly, however, for he endured multiple knee injuries through the 1990s and had numerous operations to repair the damage.

When **Mitsuharu Misawa** led the majority of All-Japan's wrestlers down a path of independence, forming Pro Wrestling NOAH in the process, Kobashi joined the mass exodus even though he was indisposed with injuries at the time. To follow Misawa, Kobashi had to vacate the AJPW Triple Crown, arguably the most important championship in the Orient. Despite all his nagging injuries—and doctor-mandated time off—Kobashi rushed to return to competition so that he could appear on the first NOAH tour. Having most recently been the top dog in AJPW, Kobashi knew his star power would be a tremendous asset to the upstart group.

Hurrying back to action, however, proved to be counterproductive not only for Kobashi, but for the rest of NOAH as well. He and the younger **Jun Akiyama** had been the promotion's two biggest draws, but Kobashi's deteriorating condition has once again forced him to the sidelines.

Coming off a bout that won him Match of the Year honors for 2000 (for a winning effort against Akiyama in December) in the Japanese press, Kobashi is faced with multiple surgeries to repair, among other things, his knees, shoulder, and elbows. Newscasts were quick to report Kobashi's inability to even complete simple tasks such as climbing stairs. His doctor remarked to the press that Kobashi has "the knees of an 80-year-old man (he'll be 34 on March 27)," prompting speculation that even after the surgeries, a return to the ring might be out of the question.

Kenta Kobashi (shown against fellow NOAH star Mitsuharu Misawa) has such bad knees at this point that there's a chance he'll never be able to wrestle again.

News out of All-Japan isn't all that good, either. The most recent Tokyo Dome show for AJPW was a disappointment at the gate, as the building was nowhere near sold out. This comes as a major blow to All-Japan, which needed a strong showing of fan support to accompany its strong lineup in the feud with New Japan Pro Wrestling.

For starters, the show featured the retirement of **Stan Hansen**, the brawling Texan many believe is the most popular foreign wrestler to ever compete for AJPW. A tribute to **Giant Baba** (founder of All-Japan) was also conducted. As far as in-ring action went, New Japan bested All-Japan in two matches, with **Keiji Muto** defeating **Taiyo Kea** (the former **Maunukea Mossman**), and **Masa Fuchi** losing to **Jushin Liger**. Both eagerly anticipated matches left the crowd a little disenchanted, as All-Japan failed to score a win.

The show's main event saw two strange pairings do battle. **Kensuke Sasaki**, the reigning IWGP heavyweight champion, teamed with Kawada, a man he wrestled for the belt just a few weeks earlier. They put differences aside to face **Genichiro Tenryu**, the current Triple Crown champion, and **Hiroshi Hase**. Adding further intrigue was the fact that Hase and Sasaki were regular tag team partners before Hase began his political career in the Japanese senate. Kawada won the match for his team after getting the better of Hase, but we are likely to see more interpromotional matches very soon.

Soo da, sayonara! □

the MEXICO REPORT

By Mike Spillane

WITHIN THE SPAN of only a few weeks, the Lucha Libre world lost three of its all-time greats, and the wrestling world continues to mourn all three losses. The deaths of ring legends **Kung Fu**, **Villano I**, and **Blue Demon** hit Mexican wrestling fans hard, as all three enjoyed long runs as popular main-eventers in their heyday.

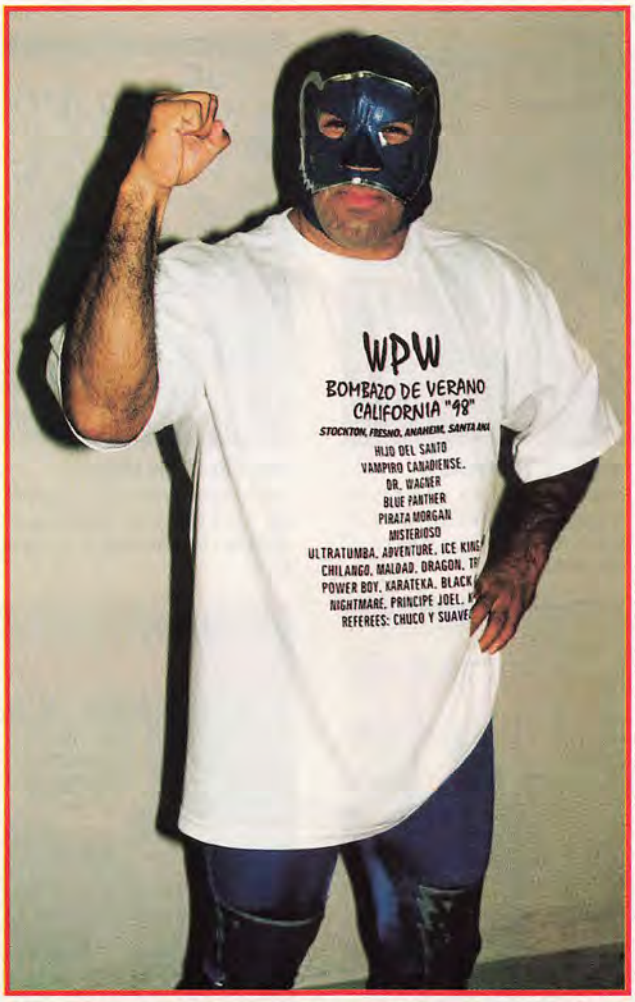
Mexican wrestling is built on a foundation of family tradition and heritage, and the stars of modern Lucha Libre are not only inspired by the stars of the past, but bound to the history of the sport itself. This is why when stars of the past die, their memories are not quickly forgotten, but are honored, as their legacies and influence can often be found alive and well in the sons and brothers who carry on without them.

Kung Fu was one of a trio of wrestlers who helped to introduce martial arts into Lucha Libre, combining hard-hitting strikes and kicks with the graceful takedowns and high-flying techniques that are so prevalent in the Mexican style. His Mexican heritage disguised by his mask, Kung Fu joined **Kato Kung Lee** and **Satoru Sayama** (better known for his stint as the original **Tiger Mask**) in a trio that enjoyed success in standard tag team and six-man matches.

As a singles wrestler, Kung Fu had legendary feuds with the likes of **Fishman** (from whom he won the Mexican National welterweight title) and **Atlantis**. Kung Fu debuted in the late-1960s, rose to prominence in the late-'70s, and enjoyed superstar status well into the '80s. In 1990, Kung Fu finally lost his mask to Atlantis, which all but ended his career as a singles contender. Born **Raymundo de la Costa**, he died of unspecified causes at the age of 49 at his home in Mexico. Between the ropes, **Kung Fu Jr.**, his 26-year-old son, keeps his name and wrestling tradition alive.

Villano I was the first son of Lucha legend **Ray Mendoza** to adopt the Villano name and tradition. Starting a trend that his four brothers would also follow, Villano I, born **Jose Diaz Mendoza**, embarked on a career in wrestling in the late-1960s and enjoyed his first major success in the UWA promotion. While all the Villanos have done well as singles wrestlers, they are best known for their tag team expertise, and when **Villano II** emerged on the scene, a new and dominant force was born. Even now, **Villanos III**, **IV**, and **V** team regularly and continue to assert their dominance.

After the death of his brother, Villano II, in 1989, Villano I scaled back his in-ring appearances, and he had not wrestled regularly since the mid-1990s. He died of a heart attack brought on by a sudden brain hemorrhage. He was 54.



Though Mexican legend Blue Demon died over the winter, his memory will be kept alive by his adopted son, Blue Demon Jr. (shown here).

Blue Demon (real name **Alejandro Munoz Moreno**) is counted among the founding fathers of modern Lucha Libre, his influence perhaps second only to that of **El Santo.** Like Santo, Blue Demon appeared in movies during an era in which Mexican cinema produced wrestling films on an almost-monthly basis. While Demon was known for his chiseled physique—and many considered him the more gifted grappler of the two—he was ultimately relegated to a spot in Santo's shadow, as Santo became the bigger cultural icon of the two.

During his storied career, Blue Demon held the NWA welterweight and the Mexican National welterweight titles, enjoying reigns in both the 1950s and the '60s. It wasn't until 1989 that Blue Demon embarked on a retirement tour of Mexico to bid farewell to his legions of fans across the country. He died of a heart attack at the age of 78. His adopted son carries on the tradition of his name and famous mask as **Blue Demon Jr.** □

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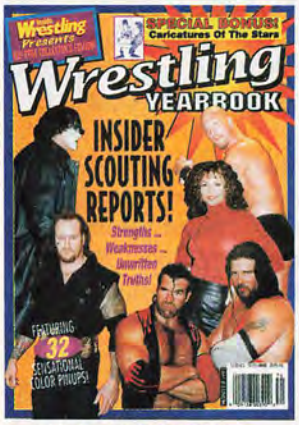
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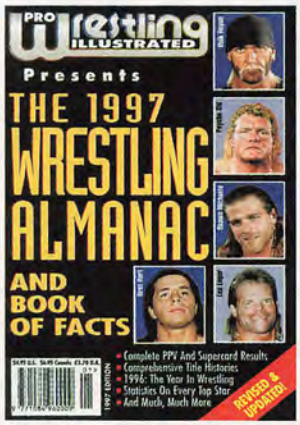
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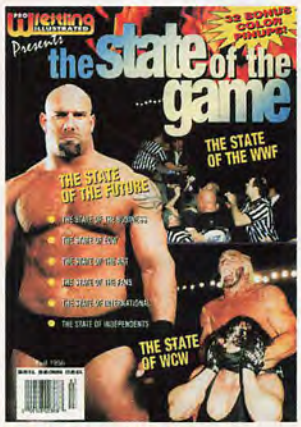

THE STATE OF THE GAME

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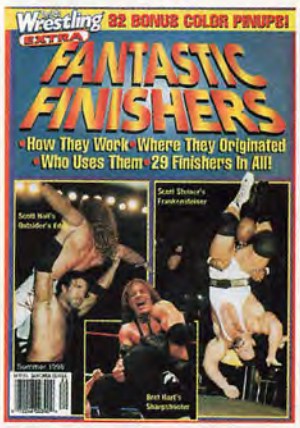
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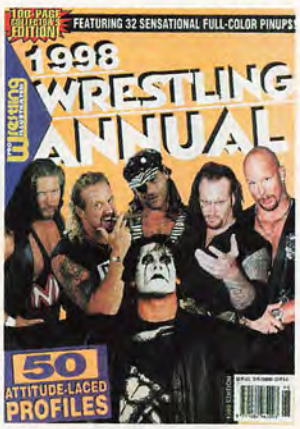

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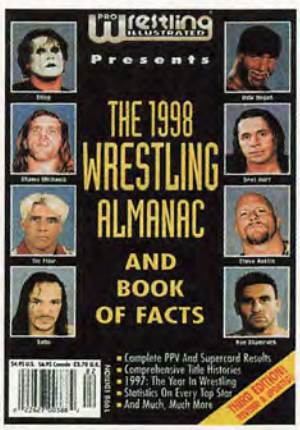
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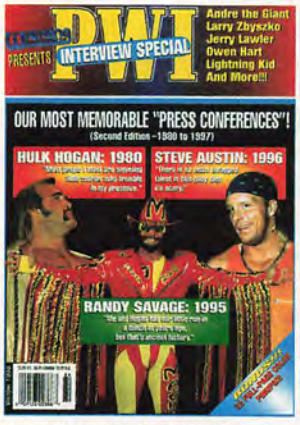

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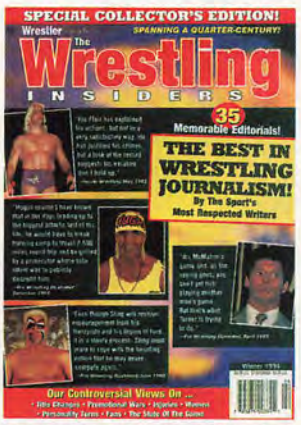

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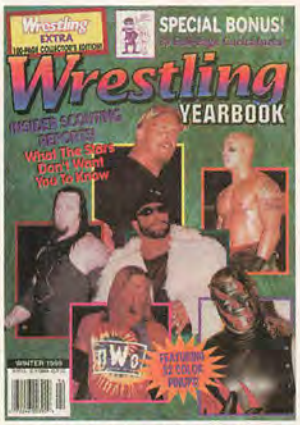

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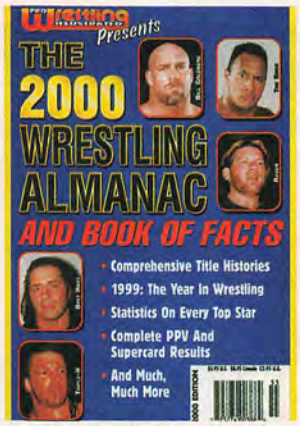
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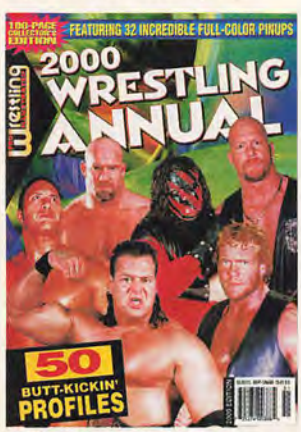

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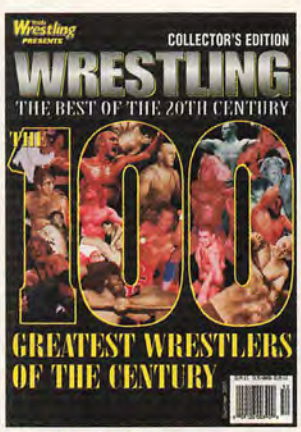

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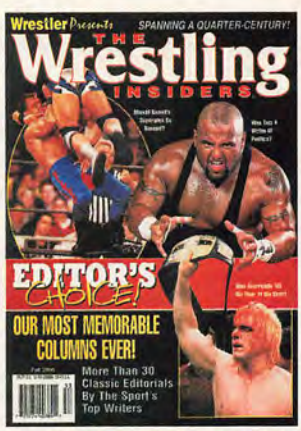
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SPOTLIGHT CARD OF THE MONTH

COLUMBIA, SC—WCW at the Township Auditorium: **The Jung Dragons** beat **Jamie Knoble** & **Evan Karagias** and **Three Count** in a three-way match ... **Norman Smiley** beat **Kwee Wee** ... Cruiserweight champion **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** beat **Rey Misterio Jr.** ... **The Cat** defeated **Mike Sanders** ... U.S. champion **Shane Douglas** beat **Hugh Morrus** ... **Kronic** beat World tag team champs **Chuck Palumbo** & **Sean O'Haire** by disqualification ... **"Diamond" Dallas Page** defeated **Jeff Jarrett** ... **Kevin Nash** beat World champ **Scott Steiner** by disqualification. (01-21-01)

—"Spotlight" photos by Vern Verna

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA

BAYOU LA BATRE—Unified Championship Wrestling at the Community Center: **Calvin Rhoades** defeated **Raine Quapone** ... **J.C. North** and **Viper** wrestled to a time-limit draw ... **Aiky Breaky Kid** & **T-Wolf** defeated **Minotaur** & **Dan Delicious** ... **Joe Kane** defeated **Tony Sweatt** ... **Al Savage** beat heavyweight champion **Steve Southern** to regain the belt ... **Big Nasty** beat TV champ **Chad Cheetum** to win the title. (01-13-01)

—Greg Garber

DELAWARE

LAUREL—Maryland Championship Wrestling at the High School: **Gregory Martin** beat **Qeenan Creed** to win the cruiserweight title ... **Ronnie Zukko** defeated **Rockin' Rebel** ... **The Patriot** defeated **The Bruiser** ... **Gillberg** beat **Dino Divine** ... **Van Hammer** beat 93.5 radio personality **Reed** ... Heavyweight champ **Jimmy Cicero** defeated **Adam Flash** ... **The Briscoe Brothers** & **Jay Caldwell** beat **The Holy Rollers** and **Corporal Punishment** in a three-way match. (01-13-01)

—Timothy A. Walker

GEORGIA

CORNELIA—National Championship Wrestling/NWA Wildside at the NCW Arena: **Scotty Patrick** & **Danny Faqir** beat **Robbie Rage** & **Kevin Northcutt** ... **Snake** defeated **Dozer** ... **Corporal Cooter** beat **Tiger** ... **The Beast** defeated **Big Henry Hoss** ... **Kid Cool** beat **Dante Silver** ... **David Young** defeated **Chris Harris** ... **Rick Michaels** beat **Sam Greco** ... **The Boogaloo Crew** defeated **A.J. Styles** & **Onyx.** (01-12-01)

—Timothy R. Redding

INDIANA

GREENSBURG—Wild Championship Wrestling Outlaws at the Parks Center: **The Spyder** pinned **The White Warrior** ... **The Screaming Eagles** defeated **The Shadow Riders** ... **Indiana Kidd Jr.** defeated **E.Z. Cruz** ... **Cousin Otter** defeated **Rob Ramer** to win the Midwest title ... **Uncle Ernie** defeated **Jazz Hoyt** ... **Itch Coma Weider** defeated **Don Basher** to win the heavyweight title. (01-20-01)

—Randy Klemme

KENDALVILLE—IAW at the Youth Center: **The Cole Brothers** beat **Shockwave** ... **Andy Chene** beat **Ray Orndorff** ... **Deputy Dog** beat **Ronnie Vegas** ... Tag team champs **Sledge** & **Krush** beat **The Ripper** & **Nasty Nick** ... Heavyweight champion **Brian Costello** beat **Bobo Brazil Jr.** (01-19-01)

—Dutch Krewda

INDIANAPOLIS—WCW Sin pay-per-view at the Canseco Fieldhouse: Cruiserweight champion **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** beat **Shane Helms** ... **Reno** pinned **Big Vito** ... **The Jung Dragons** beat **Evan Karagias** & **Jamie Knoble** ... **The Cat** beat WCW

Norman Smiley slows Kwee Wee. Despite being a hardcore legend in WCW, Smiley now eschews his former chair-swinging ways to wrestle a more traditional mat style, of which he is a master.

Despite being terrified of the Township Auditorium faithful, cruiserweight champ Chavo Guerrero Jr. was able to ground Rey Misterio Jr. Using a few underhanded tactics, Guerrero retained his title.

Commissioner **Mike Sanders** to win the commissionership ... **Lance Storm, Mike Awesome,** & **Elix Skipper** beat **Rey Misterio Jr., Konnan,** & **Billy Kidman** in a "Penalty Box" match ... **Meng** beat hardcore champ **Terry Funk** and **Crowbar** in a three-way match to win the title ... **Chuck Palumbo** & **Sean O'Haire** defeated World tag team champs **Kevin Nash** & **Dallas Page** to win the title ... **Shane Douglas** beat U.S. champ **Gen. Rection** in a first-blood match to win the title ... **Lex Luger** & **Buff Bagwell** defeated **Bill Goldberg** & **DeWayne Bruce**. Because of the loss, Goldberg was forced to retire from WCW ... World champion **Scott Steiner** beat **Sid Vicious, Jeff Jarrett,** and **Road Warrior Animal** in a four-way match.
(01-14-01)

—Dave Lenker

KENTUCKY

SHELBYVILLE—Bad 2 The Bone Wrestling at the Shelby County Fairgrounds: **Josh Garrett** beat **Billy Black** ... **The Regulator** defeated **BioHazard** ... **Maxx Mizery** beat **The Atomic Dog** ... **PsychoDelic** defeated **T.J. Lightnin** by disqualification ... **Dennis Dempsey** beat **Alister Fear** ... **Magnum** defeated **Manslaughter** by disqualification.
(01-13-01)

—Frank Krewda

LOUISIANA

NEW ORLEANS—WWF Royal Rumble pay-per-view at the New Orleans Arena: **The Dudley Boyz** beat World tag team champs **Edge** & **Christian** to win the title ... **Chris Jericho** beat Intercontinental champion **Chris Benoit** in a ladder match to win the title ... Women's champion **Ivory** beat **Chyna** ... World champion **Kurt Angle** defeated **Triple-H** ... **Steve Austin** won the 30-man Royal Rumble, last eliminating **Kane**.
(01-21-01)

—Will Welsh

SHREVEPORT—American Championship Wrestling at the Rockin' Rodeo: **Samir** beat **Joey Corman** to win the cruiserweight title ... **Gil Gracie** beat **Chris Chronic** ... **New Age Dawg** & **Brangus** beat **Bruiser** & **Cyrus** ... **Mace** beat **Epi, James Davis**, and **Ronnie Rose** in a four-way match to win the hardcore title ... **Jeremy Young** beat **Big John Murder** ... **Ronnie Rose** defeated **Pendragon, Blake Wiggins,** and **Big Daddy O'Shea** in a four-way match to win the heavyweight title.
(01-16-01)

—Maurice Joliard

MASSACHUSETTS

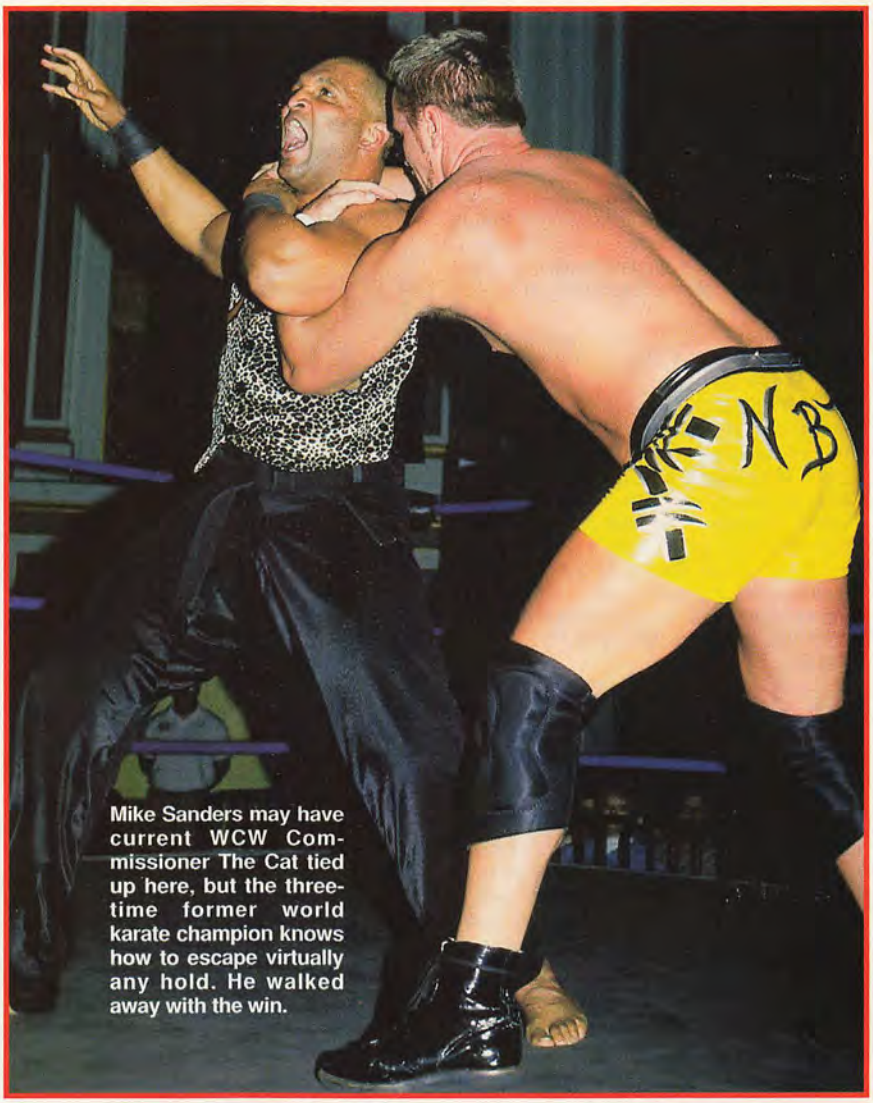
REVERE—Chaotic Wrestling at Wonderland Greyhound Park: **El Mascarado** beat **Luis Ortiz** ... **Kyle Storm** beat **Wagner Brown** ... Midget champion **Short Sleeve Sampson** beat **The Golden Buddha** ... **Master Sandy** beat **Slater** and **Yankee Rebel Bart** in a three-way match ... Tag team champs **The One Night Stand** beat **Touch of Reality** ... **Ali Muhammed** beat **Curtis Slamdawg** ... Heavyweight champion **Gino Martino** beat **Kronus** in a streetfight.
(01-12-01)

—Rich Palladino

MICHIGAN

WARREN—Section 8 Wrestling at the Hot Rocks Bar: **Maynard R. Nek** beat **Anthony Riveria** ... **Mark Joka** defeated **Chris Valentino** ... **Ricco Rodriguez** beat **Slater** ... **Nate Matson** defeated **Gutter** and **Prof. Maxwell** in a three-way match ... **Axl Rage** & **The Asylum** beat **Rik Matrix** in a handicap match ... **Miss Maximus** defeated **Eamon Fagen** ... **The Darkriders** beat **The Serial Killers** ... **Rock Stevens** defeated heavyweight champ **Rip Malibu** to win the title.
(01-14-01)

—Trent Kilmer



Mike Sanders may have current WCW Commissioner The Cat tied up here, but the three-time former world karate champion knows how to escape virtually any hold. He walked away with the win.

Who knew "The Franchise" Shane Douglas was so limber? Certainly not Hugh Morrus. Douglas, the U.S. champ, rears back on the head of Morrus en route to a successful title defense.

MISSOURI

ELDON—World League Wrestling at the Community Center: **Mr. Destiny** beat **Tim Warcloud** ... **Tina Rotten** defeated **Helena Heavenly** ... **Meng** beat **Superstar Steve** ... **Wade Chisum** & **Helena Heavenly** beat **Trevor Rhodes** & **Tina Rotten** ... **Meng** & **The Barbarian** defeated **Pure Sex Appeal** ... **Luminous Warrior** beat heavyweight champion **James Grizzly** to win the title. (01-20-01)

—Matt Duffield

POPLAR BLUFF—ECW at the Black River Coliseum: **Prodigy** beat **Phoenix** ... **Christian York** & **Joey Matthews** defeated **Guido Maritato** & **Tony Mamaluke** ... **Jack Victory** beat **C.W. Anderson** ... **Yoshihiro Tajiri** defeated **Super Crazy** ... World tag team champs **Danny Doring** & **Roadkill** beat **Julio Dinero** & **E.Z. Money** ... **Tommy Dreamer** beat **Justin Credible** ... World champion **Rhino** defeated **The Sandman.** (01-12-01)

—Steve Drew

NEW JERSEY

WEST ORANGE—Independent Wrestling Federation at West Orange High School West: **Rob Eckos** defeated **Damien Adams** ... **Dr. Hurtz** & **Marc Verow** beat **Jade Divine** & **H.P. Walker** for the tag team title ... **Hadrian** defeated **Josh Daniels** ... **Roman** defeated heavyweight champion **Kevin Knight** for the title ... American champion **Biggie Biggs** beat **Kasey Koresh** in a bullrope match ... **Rapid Fire Maldonado** won a 12-man battle royal ... **Danny Doring** defeated **Simon Diamond.** (01-21-01)

—Dominick Valenti

NEW YORK

ROCHESTER—New Millennium Wrestling at the Ukrainian Club: **Eric Everlast** defeated **Danger** ... Tag team champions **Triple XXX** defeated **Chip Stetson** & **The Puerto Rican Nightmare** by disqualification ... **Oman Tortuga** defeated **Kevin Dunn** ... **Raptor** & **Chameleon** defeated **Rick Mango** & **Showtime** ... **Johnny Walker** defeated TV champ **Mayhem** to win the title ... **Fred Curry** defeated **Mike Hardy** ... **Chills 'n' Thrills** defeated **Mean Marcos** & **Big Cat** in a table match ... **Danger** defeated **H.C. Loc** ... **J.P. Black** defeated **Eric Everlast** to win the vacant heavyweight title ... **Don Montoya** defeated **Reckless Youth.** (01-13-01)

—Todd Brantley

NORTH CAROLINA

BUTNER—Southern Championship Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Johnny Thundercloud** beat **Natrone Steele** ... **David Blanchard** beat **David Lee Gilbert** ... **Saltwater Redneck** defeated **Wort** ... **Otis Apollo** beat **Boris Dragoff** ... **Status** & **Aldo DeGama** beat **The Southside Playaz** ... **Cham Pain** and **Frank Parker** co-won a 30-man battle royal ... **Jesse Drive** beat **Sheik DeBeers** and **Trailer Park Heat** in a three-way hardcore match ... **Gotti** defeated **Natrone Steele** ... **Cham Pain** beat **Frank Parker** and **Scab** in a three-way match to win the heavyweight title. (01-20-01)

—Greg Mosorjak

SHARPSBURG—Continental Championship Wrestling at the N.E.W. Academy: **Max Cortez** beat **Muddy Mudcat** ... **Joe Riot** beat **Cage** ... **Max Cortez** beat **D-Licious** ... **Iron Chief** defeated **Marc Ash** ... **Nemesis** beat **Vinnie Vain** ... **Viper** beat **Bounty Hunter** by disqualification. (01-20-01)

—Marcus Watkins

ROBBINS—New Frontier Wrestling Alliance at the Ellise Middle School: Heavyweight champion **Cham Pain** beat **Dyce** ... **The Real Deal** defeated **El Hijo del Fugar** ... **Steve Michaels** beat **Tic** ... **Pete Roc** defeated **Thick Rick 2001** ... **Hayze** defeated **Steel** in a hardcore match ... **Criminal Intentions** beat **Crash the Milkman** & **Caesar Augustus** to win the tag team title. (01-13-01)

—Dominick Valenti

SANFORD—Southern Championship Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Caprice Coleman** beat **Ladykiller** ... **David Lee Gilbert** beat **Natrone Steele** by disqualification ... **The Gargoyles** beat **The Southside Playaz** ... **Jesse Drive** beat **Justin Drive** and **Rick Link** in a three-way match ... **Gotti** beat **Dewey Cheatum** ... **Frank Parker** beat **Lazarus** ... **Scab** beat **Cham Pain.** (01-13-01)

—Greg Mosorjak

WILMINGTON—Atlantic Coast Championship Wrestling at the Armory: **Marc Ash** defeated **Leo Alure** ... Cruiserweight champion **Nemesis** defeated **Seven** ... **Lex Reed** & **Doug Renegade** beat **The Grapplers** ... **Boris Dragoff** beat **Viper** ... Heavyweight champion **Flex Phenom** defeated **Mike Draven** ... **Big Daddy Pain** won a battle royal.
(01-13-01)

—Dominick Valenti

OHIO

WILMINGTON—Powerhouse Championship Wrestling at the Expo Center: **Scotty O'Brady** beat **Crucifer** ... **Vigilante** defeated **Andy Awesome** ... Intercontinental champion **Lone Wolf** beat **Buz B. Wilde** ... **Mike West** defeated **Frederick From Hollywood** ... **The Miracle Man** defeated **Johnny Rayz** ... **All-American** defeated **Jim News** ... Ladies champion **Naughtia** defeated **Lady Victoria** ... Heavyweight champion **Phil N. Funky** beat **Keith News** in a lumberjack match.
(01-13-01)

—Jennifer Owens

LUCASVILLE—Superstar Wrestling Federation at the Cherokee Bingo Hall: **Rory Fox** beat **Dave Haney** ... **Pyro** & **Mercedes** and **Max Power, Zodiac,** & **The Mastermind** fought to a no-contest in a handicap match ... **B.J. Cantrell** defeated **Race Steele** ... **Mad Anthony McMurphy** defeated **Dragen** ... **The Tower of Doom** beat **The Lords of the Dance** in a handicap match ... **Sean Casey** & **Peaches** beat **Cody Hawk** & **Hellena Heavenly** ... **Chris Smith** beat **Tank Runyon** ... **Trik Nasty** defeated **Tyrin** ... **Andy Runyon** beat **The Tower of Doom** in a hardcore match.
(01-12-01)

—Mark Kitchen

CINCINNATI—Heartland Wrestling Association at Les Thatcher's Main Event Pro Wrestling Camp: **Ranger Hayes, Crypt Kaldron,** & **Tony B.** beat **Ash Parker, Time Bomb,** & **Derek Neikirk** ... **Dean Jablonski** beat **Bo Lewis** ... **Cody Hawk** beat **Bobby Casanova** ... **The A Squad** beat **Hellena's Hunks** ... **Rory Fox** beat **Chip Fairway** ... **Shark Boy** beat **The Hussla** and **Bennie Da Bookie** ... **Race Steele** beat **Mad Anthony McMurphy**.
(01-09-01)

—Quincy Sandler

Chuck Palumbo levels Brian Adams with a bionic elbow early in their tag team match (opposite page). Later, both members of Kronic grabbed Palumbo to deliver their high times finisher (above). Before they could execute it, Mark Jindrak attacked Kronic, giving them a DQ win over Palumbo and Sean O'Haire.

OKLAHOMA

TULSA—Oklahoma Pro Wrestling at the OPW Arena: **Jimmy Kane** & **Ian St. James** defeated **Tarantula** & **Dexter Hardaway** ... **Joey Cassanova** beat **Grenade** ... **Sgt. Stryker** defeated **K.C. Kannon** ... **Bull Schmitt** beat **Splash Jackson** and **Brandon Groom** in a three-way dance ... **Malice** & **Schrapnel** defeated **Dark Angel** & **Brian Cruze**.
(01-13-01)

—Rick Vyper

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA—Central Wrestling Coalition at the Murphy Rec Center: **Greg Spitz** beat **Tiger Wilde** ... **Jimmy Jannetty** defeated **Steve Cava** ... **Little Jeannie** beat **Tracy Taylor** ... **Derek Domino** and **Johnny Greco** wrestled to a no-contest ... **Flash Wheeler** defeated **Yar** ... **Breaker Morant** beat **Tony Stetson** by disqualification ... Heavyweight champion **The Cremator** and **Johnny Hot Body** wrestled to a double-countout.
(01-19-01)

—Joe Zanolle

READING—IWA at the Riverside Beneficial Arena: **Kid Mayhem** defeated **The Beater** ... **Tommy Golden** defeated **Oxx Hogg** ... **The Backseat Boyz** defeated **The Spanish Announce Team** and **The Divine Storm** in a three-way match ... **The Damned** defeated **Skeeter** & **Draven McKnight** to win the tag team title ... **Bax** defeated light heavyweight champion **Evan Leppy** by disqualifcation ... **Mikey Whipwreck** defeated **Guillotine LeGrande** ... **Dylan Night** defeated **Rapid Fire Maldonado** in a Reading streetfight ... **Psycho Bitch** & **Casey Ganster** defeated **J.D. Powers** & **Vince Gagliardo.**
(01-19-01)

—Bryan Riegel

MONESSEN—Championship Wrestling Federation at the Civic Center: **Guido Corleone** and **Twin Tackle Snisky** wrestled to a double-disqualification ... **Armageddon** & **J-Ru** and **TNT** wrestled to a no-contest ... Mon-Valley champion **Shirley Doe** defeated **Eric Love** ... NWA-East heavyweight champion **Quinn Magnum** defeated **Cory K** by disqualification ... **Super Hentai, The Mantis,** & **Orion** defeated **Scott Venom, Dirk Ciglar,** & **Brandon K** ... Heavyweight champion **Denny Gregory** defeated **PowerHouse Hughes** by disqualification ... **Mad Mike** won the 30-man Monessen Rumble.
(01-13-01)

—Mike Charles

RHODE ISLAND

WARWICK—Chaotic Wrestling at the Rhode Island Indoor Sports Arena: **Kyle Storm** beat **Bob Evans** ... **Edward G. Xtasy** beat **Travis Funk** ... **Short Sleeve Sampson** beat **The Golden Buddha** ... **Master Sandy** beat **Onix** by forfeit ... **Tony Atlas** and **Ali Muhammed** battled to a double-countout ... Heavyweight champion **Gino Martino** beat **Ronnie D. Lishus** in a lumberjack match ... **Master Sandy** won a battle royal.
(01-19-01)

—Rich Palladino

PROVIDENCE—Rhode Island Wrestling Alliance at the YMCA: **Danny Cama** beat **The Reaper** ... **Bad News** beat **Johnny T** ... **Danny Boy O'Callahan** beat **Silver Shecky** ... Tag team champs **The X-Communicados** beat **Shecky Lover** & **Hector Diaz** ... **Bill Thomas**

Dallas Page unloads a ton of left-right combinations toward Jeff Jarrett's head. It's obvious that Page still hasn't forgiven "The Chosen One" for the David Arquette fiasco of 2000.

beat **Lumberjack** ... **Cassy Straytor** beat **Sweet Rita** ... TV champ **Danger Boy Alfredo** beat **Golden Hawk** ... Heavyweight champ **Wolverine** beat **Low Gear McFarland** ... **Danger Boy Alfredo** won a battle royal.
(01-13-01)

—Dave Lenker

TENNESSEE

KINGSPORT—Southern States Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Death Row** beat **Justin Matthews** ... **Chuck Jones** beat **Tony Givens** ... **Roger Anderson** beat **Dwayne Holiday** ... **Mike Cooper** pinned **Ray Idol** ... Tag team champs **Something Else** beat **Wade Adams** & **Matthews** ... **Stan Sierra** beat **Iron Cross** to win the heavyweight title ... **Steve Phillips** beat **Brian Overbay** by disqualification ... **The Batten Twins** beat **Beau James** & **Wade Adams.**
(01-14-01)

—William Petry

TEXAS

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS—Texas Championship Wrestling at the Texas Indoor Speedway: **Scott Patric** beat **Big John Murder** ... **Sean Reagen** beat **El Commando** ... **Joey Corman** beat **Mary Jane** ... Tag team champions **Epi** & **Flame** beat **Gary Tool** & **Stryker** ... **Big Johnson** and **Pendragon** fought to a double-countout.
(01-13-01)

—Paul Saules

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS—NWA Southwest at the Texas Indoor Speedway: **Gravedigger** beat **Pablo Berrito** ... **Chris Chronic** & **Mary Jane** defeated **Larry Lava** & **Simply Luscious** ... **Russian Brute** beat **Necro the Butcher** by disqualification ... **Al Jackson** & **Mike Anthony** defeated **Larry Green** & **Chris Young** ... NWA Texas junior heavyweight champion **Mike Thunder** defeated **Joey Corman** ... **Gary Tool** defeated **Gravedigger** & **Samir** in a handicap match ... NWA Southwest heavyweight champion **Hotstuff Hernandez** beat NWA heavyweight champion **Mike Rapada** by disqualification in a best-of-three-falls match.
(01-12-01)

—Rob Moore

VIRGINIA

NEWPORT NEWS—Virginia Championship Wrestling at Mitty's Nightclub: **Robert Royal** defeated **Skeeter** by submission ... **Preston Quinn** defeated **Korie James** by submission ... Tag team champions **2 Damn Badd** & **Steve Perez** defeated **Christian York** & **Joey Matthews** ... Heavyweight champion **Ray Storm** pinned **The Saltwater Redneck** ... **Idol X** defeated **Eric Kreed, Zieg**, and **The American Ranger** in a four-way hardcore match. After the match, Idol X unmasked, revealing himself to be **Robert Royal.**
(01-21-01)

—Justin Russell

WEST VIRGINIA

MARTINSBURG—Atlantic Terror Championship Wrestling at the Berkeley County Multipurpose Center: **Morgus the Maniac** beat **Earl the Pearl** ... **Terry Allen** beat **Chuckie Manson** to win the vacant hardcore title ... **Doug Delicious** defeated **Patch** ... **Mark Shrader** & **Gregory Martin** defeated **Dino Divine** & **Chad Austin** to win the tag team title ... **Julio Dinero** beat **Qeenan Creed** ... **Joey Matthews** & **Christian York** defeated **Steve Corino** & **Corporal Punishment** ... Heavyweight champion **Don Rott** beat **C.J. Brock.**
(01-19-01)

—Jeff Amdur

RED JACKET—National Pro Wrestling at the Community Center: **Zebra Kid** pinned **The Dirty Dealer** ... **Chris Draven** defeated **Ian Killjoy** ... **Bobby Storm** beat **Brian Gilbert** by disqualification ... **The Outcast** defeated **The Canadian Grappler** ... **Kwik Silver** beat **The Black Dragon** and **Flying Death** in a three-way match ... **Punchy McGhee** won a 10-man battle royal ... **Brian Logan** defeated **Punchy McGhee.**
(01-13-01)

—Andrew Sparkman

OAK HILL—Appalachia Pro Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Kid Apollo** defeated **Drake Tungsten** ... **Psycho** defeated **Dave Scott** ... **Richie Action** defeated **Marty Gras** to win the cruiserweight title ... **Joey Morton** & **Jack Miller** defeated **Eddie Edmonds** & **Mike Morgan** to win the tag team title ... **Brian Logan** defeated heavyweight champion **Frank Parker** by disqualification.
(01-09-01)

—Butch Simpson

WISCONSIN

GREEN BAY—WWF at the Brown County Arena: **Big Bossman** defeated **Midian** ... **Molly Holly** wrestled **Lita** to a no-contest when **Steven Richards** interfered. Lita ended up pinning Richards as Holly made a three-count ... **The Goodfather** beat **"Brooklyn Brawler" Steve Lombardi** ... **Perry Saturn** defeated **Crash Holly** ... World tag team champions **Christian** & **Edge** defeated **The Dudley Boyz** and **The Hardy Boyz** in a three-way match ... **Val Venis** defeated **K-Kwik** ... **Steve Blackman** beat **Bull Buchanan** ... World champion **Kurt Angle** defeated **Chris Jericho.**
(01-14-01)

—Dominick Valenti

MADISON—WWF at the Alliant Energy Center: **The Acolytes** beat **The Dupps** ... Women's champion **Ivory** defeated **The Kat** ... **Albert** beat **Hardcore Holly** ... **Jerry Lawler** defeated hardcore champion **Raven** in a non-title match ... **Steve Austin** & **The Undertaker** beat **Kane** & **Rikishi** ... **Test** defeated **Sho Funaki** ... **D-Lo Brown** beat **Grandmaster Sexay** ... Intercontinental champion **Chris Benoit** beat **Billy Gunn** ... **Scotty Too Hotty** defeated **Chaz.**
(01-14-01)

—Jay Rirden

LaCROSSE—WCW at the LaCrosse Center: **The Jung Dragons** beat **Evan Karagias** & **Jamie Noble** and **Three Count** in a three-way match ... **The Cat** defeated **Elix Skipper** ... **Lance Storm** & **Mike Awesome** beat **Billy Kidman** & **Rey Misterio Jr.** ... U.S. champ **Gen. Rection** beat **Shane Douglas** ... World tag team champions **Kevin Nash** & **Dallas Page** beat **Chuck Palumbo** & **Shawn Stasiak** ... **Lex Luger** and **Bill Goldberg** fought to a double-disqualification ... **Bill Goldberg** & **DeWayne Bruce** beat **Lex Luger** & **Buff Bagwell** ... World champion **Scott Steiner** beat **Jeff Jarrett** and **Sid Vicious** in a three-way match.
(01-07-01)

—Larry Kichen

Kevin Nash and Scott Steiner are two diverse personalities who have an odd relationship. Sometimes they get along, but sometimes they don't. Luckily for fans at the Township Auditorium, WCW visited while Nash and Steiner were in the middle of one of their bigger tiffs (left and below).

INTERNATIONAL

AUSTRALIA

SYDNEY—Titan Wrestling Promotions at the Parramatta RSL Club: Heavyweight champ **Dean Draven** and **Red Flair** wrestled to a double-disqualification ... **Maverick** beat **Ace Brimshaw** ... **Slash** defeated **Mace** by countout ... **Striker** beat **Pistol Pete** ... **Dean Draven** beat **Mace** and **Red Flair** in a three-way match. (01-20-01)

—Rodney Messner

CANADA

NORTH VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA—Extreme Canadian Championship Wrestling at the F.O.E. Hall: **Chance Beckett** and **Average Joe** wrestled to a draw ... **Bam Bam Bambi** beat **Buffy** ... **The Pretty Boys** beat **Disco Fury** & **Todd Kelly** ... **Michelle Starr** beat **Juggernaut** ... **Moondog Manson** beat **Prince Aladiin** ... Heavyweight champion **Dr. Luther** and **Havoc** wrestled to a no-contest. (01-20-01)

—Arnold Crey

TORONTO, ONTARIO—Apocalypse Wrestling Federation at Cactus Pete's: Heavyweight champion **Jaguar Vijay Singh** beat **Tony Mack** in a table match ... **Calendar Girl Tracy** beat **Ms. B. Haven** in a retirement match ... **Robin Knightwing** pinned **Joey Knight** ... **The Original Sinn** won a battle royal, last eliminating **El Fuego** ... **Danny Dynamic** & **Slade** defeated **Vladimir Urkov** & **Sinn** ... **El Fuego** beat **Flesh Gordon** ... **Kwan Chang** beat **The Squeegee Kid** by disqualification. (01-14-01)

—Tomas Roy

MONTREAL, QUEBEC—Northern Championship Wrestling at the NCW Center: **Franky the Mobster** defeated **Piranha** to win the Quebec championship ... **Mark Male** & **Mad Dog** beat **Double Trouble** ... **Steven the Sweet Boy** beat **Iceman** ... Tag team champs **Marc the Grizzly** & **Kid Rock** (not the musician) defeated **Jayzon Reaper** & **RUSH** ... **Nightstalker, Nova Cain,** & **Blaze** defeated **Bishop, MTH,** & **Black Eagle** ... **TNT** & **Diablero** beat **Deadly Venumm** ... **Eric Shelley** beat Inter-city champion **Nightmare** by disqualification ... **Dream Killer** beat **Chakal.** (01-12-01)

—Eric LeClair

JAPAN

TOKYO—All-Japan Pro Wrestling at Korakuen Hall: **Susumu Mochizuk, Yasushi Kanda,** & **Darkness Dragon** beat **Gran Naniwa, Psicosis,** & **Halloween** ... **Kim Duk, Jim Steele,** & **Cedman** beat **Nobutaka Araya, Ryuji Hijikata,** & **Nobukazu Hirai** ... **Mike Barton** & **Mohammed Yone** defeated **Giant Kimala II** & **Damian** ... **George Hines** & **Hiroshi Hase** beat **Masahito Kakihara** & **Mitsuya Nagai** ... Triple Crown champion **Genichiro Tenryu** beat **Shigeo Okumura** ... **Taiyo Kea** & **Johnny Smith** defeated **Toshiaki Kawada** & **Masa Fuchi** to win the vacant International tag team title. (01-14-01)

—Koichi Yoshizawa

OSAKA—Pro Wrestling NOAH at Furitsu Gym: **2 Cold Scorpio** beat **Yoshinobu Kanemura** and **Naomichi Marufuji** in a three-way match ... **Daisuke Ikeda, Mitsuo Momota,** & **Rusher Kimura** beat **Jun Izumida, Tsuyoshi Kikuchi,** & **Haruka Eigen** ... **Akitoshi Saito** & **Masashi Aoyagi** defeated **Makoto Hashi** & **Kentaro Shiga** ... **Takeshi Rikio** beat **Takeshi Morishima** ... **Satoru Asako, Yoshihiro Takayama,** & **Takao Omori** beat **Takashi Suguira, Masao Inoue,** & **Tamon Honda** ... **Mitsuharu Misawa** & **Yoshinari Ogawa** beat **Shinya Hashimoto** & **Alexander Otsuka** ... **Vader** & **Jun Akiyama** defeated **Kenta Kobashi** & **Akira Taue.** (01-13-01)

—Koichi Yoshizawa

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY JUNE

NEW YORK

NEW YORK—WWF at Madison Square Garden: **Tony Garea** beat **Adrian Adonis** ... **Blackjack Mulligan** beat **S.D. Jones** .. **Salvatore Bellomo** defeated **Baron Mikel Scicluna** ... **Swede Hanson** beat **Laurent Soucie** ... **Steve Travis** defeated **Charlie Fulton** ... **Johnny Rodz** beat **Rick McGraw** ... **Jay** & **Jules Strongbow** defeated **Mr. Fuji** & **Mr. Saito** ... **Bob Orton Jr.** beat **Pedro Morales** by disqualification ... World champion **Bob Backlund** defeated **Jimmy Snuka.** (06-28-82)

—PWI archives

TEXAS

HOUSTON—NWA at the Coliseum: **Jerry Kozak** and **Jack Donovan** wrestled to a draw ... **Rip Collins** beat **Jack Dalton** by disqualification ... **Mark Lewin** defeated **Chuck Conley** ... **Kurt** & **Karl** defeated **Johnny Weaver** & **Nick Kozak** ... **Pepper Gomez** beat **Bill Watts** in a best-of-three-falls match. (06-22-63)

—PWI archives

WISCONSIN

GREEN BAY—AWA at the Brown County Arena: **The Crusher** beat **Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie** in a best-of-three-falls chain match ... **Nick Bockwinkel** defeated **Blackjack Lanza** ... **Curt Hennig** beat **Abdullah the Butcher** by disqualification ... **Steve Olsonoski** and **Larry Zbyszko** wrestled to a draw ... **Chris Markoff** beat **Tom Stone.** (06-24-84)

—PWI archives

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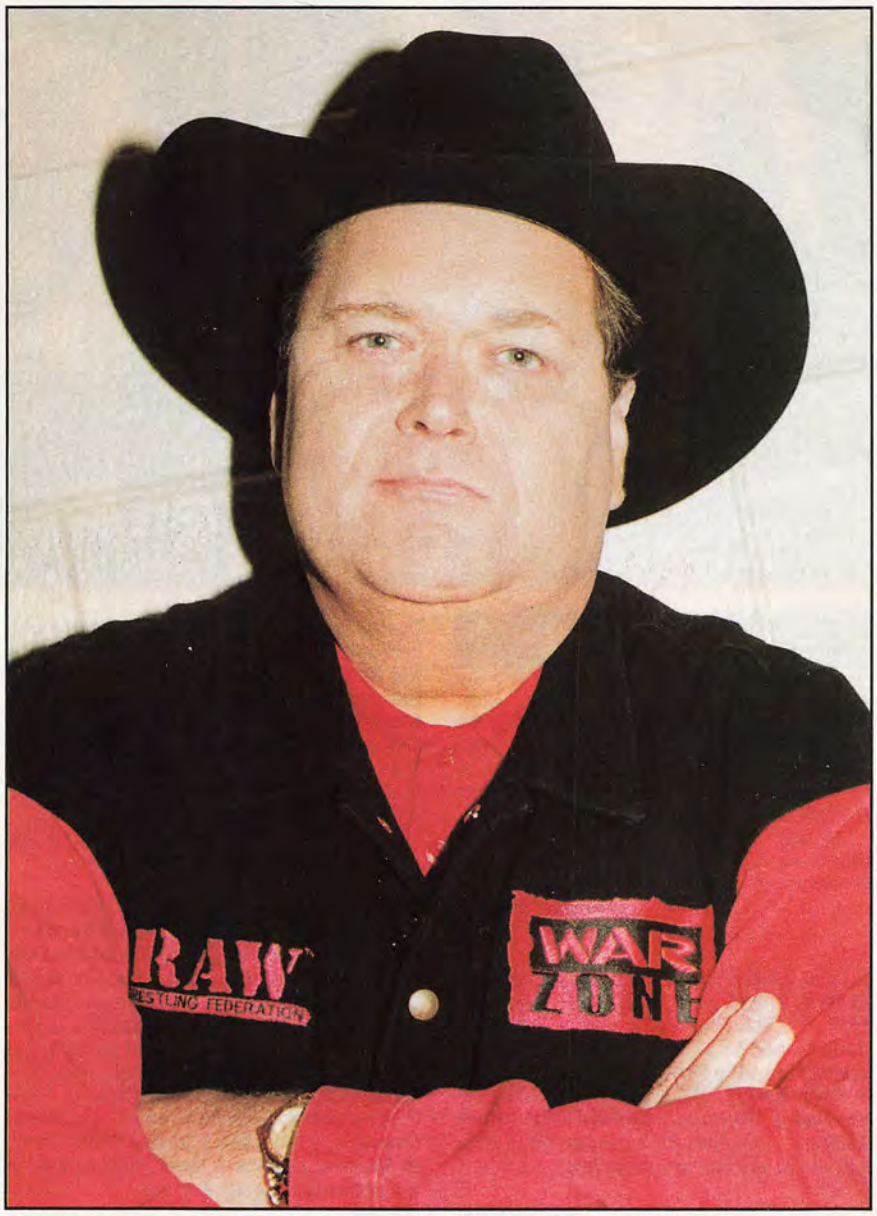
(Continued from page 13)



For what seemed like months on end, Jim Ross hyped his BBQ sauce on wwf.com. But once it was released, the WWF deemed it too expensive to make. The WWF is looking to relaunch the sauce with cheaper ingredients. *Yummy!*

Academy to **Rudy Gonzales,** the man who helped HBK run the school. Though the Academy will undergo a name change, Michaels still hopes to be a part of the school in an advisory role ... Just curious: Will anyone other than **Danger Boy Alfredo** and **Wolverine** ever hold the Rhode Island Wrestling Alliance heavyweight and television titles? ... Who's gonna buy Jim Ross' BBQ sauce now that Ross has announced the WWF is cutting back on the sauce's costly ingredients? Companies usually promote new-and-improved products, not cheaper-and-thriftier ones.

That's it for me this month, fans. Enjoy your wanderings. ☐

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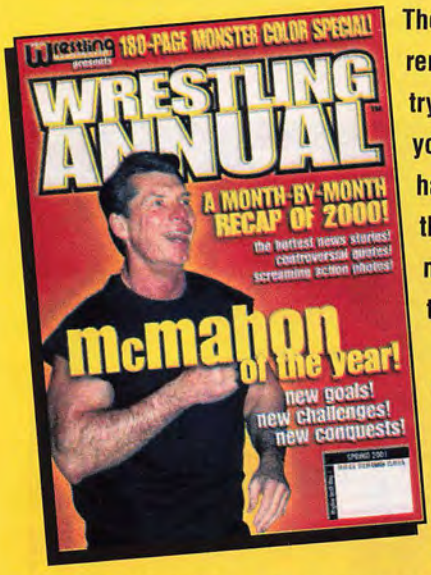

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Well, what do you know ...

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WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

As votes for the 2000 Achievement Awards started rolling in, one thing became clear right away: Either The Rock or Triple-H was going to be *PWI's* 2000 Wrestler of the Year. That being the case, we commissioned talented artist Peter J. Battaglioli to render two portraits, one of The Rock and one of Triple-H. The winner's portrait would make it onto the cover of the April 2001 issue of *PWI*. The loser's portrait would never see the light of day. Lo and behold, The Rock edged out Hunter by 213 votes and became the April 2001 cover boy.

Reader reaction to Wrestler of the Year voting was passionate.

"The Rock is the man, baby!" wrote Michael Richter of Bayonne, New Jersey. "He definitely was the Wrestler of the Year! It shouldn't have been that close."

"What bull," wrote Sydney Wetzel of Columbus, Ohio. "There's no way The Rock had a better year than Triple-H. No way."

"Rock and Triple-H both deserved to win," wrote Shawn Yeal of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. "It just stinks that one of them had to lose."

HOGAN, HOGAN, AND MORE HOGAN

Having just read your article about how WWF fans want to see Hulk Hogan make a return to the federation ("Hulk Hogan: WWF Fans Want Him Back!" March 2001), I have a few comments. If Hulk Hogan were to go back to the WWF, I think Vince McMahon would make Hogan's life hell. McMahon would take out the years of frustration he has inside of him for when *Nitro* was kicking *Raw's* butt in the ratings. He would screw Hogan worse than he screwed Bret Hart. If I were the "Hulkster," I would do the right thing and return to WCW, take the belt from Scott Steiner, and prove to everyone why I'm the greatest of all-time.

KYLE CUMMINGS
Stony Point, NY

I'm a WWF fan, and I don't want Hulk Hogan back in the federation. All my friends are WWF fans, too, and none of them want Hogan back in the WWF, either. I don't know whom you polled, but inviting Hogan back for another run in the federation would prove disastrous to the WWF's morale. What would Chris Benoit, Eddie Guerrero, and the other Radicals think? They left WCW to escape Hogan's shadow. I think they'd be really mad if he were to suddenly show up in the WWF.

TRACY LINO
Marion, OH

I would love to see the "Hulkster" return to his former federation, if for no other reason than to see what actions he would take upon arriving. I have conjured up some possible scenarios for a Hogan return to the WWF:

Hogan aligns himself with the McMahon family. There is little doubt a faction including Hulk, Vince, and Triple-H would dominate the WWF. With Stephanie in the fold, the group would have almost complete control of the World title, at least until Shane or Linda returned (provided they don't join as well). The only problem would be keeping the egos of both Hogan and "The Game" in check.

The return of the "Real American." This would be an ill-advised move on Hogan's part. Today's fan prefers more of an edge to athletes, and the "Hulkster's" former persona would not go over as well as it did from 1984 to 1993. If Hogan wishes to remain a fan favorite, he needs to retain the attitude he adopted during his final days in WCW.

We had strong reader reaction to our March 2001 cover story that discussed the possible return of Hulk Hogan to the WWF. Now that Eric Bischoff is back with WCW, it might have just been one huge moot point.

The New World Order, part III. Obviously, Hogan would be unable to form another actual NWO in the WWF. However, I doubt the "Hulkster" has forgotten all the cheap shots Vince has fired his way. Hogan enjoyed great success as leader of the NWO and might use that experience to make life miserable for McMahon.

Whichever road Hogan chooses to travel, you can bet a return to the WWF would generate excitement and interest.

ADAM WILCOX
Niagara Falls, Ontario

Hey, if the WWF brings back Hogan, why don't we just bring back The Ultimate Warrior? "Macho Man" Randy Savage, too! Mike Rotundo and Earthquake would really fill out the roster. And I hear Tugboat is looking for work. And then, to top it all off, Vinnie Mac could bring in Ted DiBiase to manage the whole lot of them and name the group the Old World Order or something like that. It'd be great!

HANK ROLLINS
Philadelphia, PA

DUMBED DOWN DUDLEYS?

On December 17, I sat down to watch *WWF Sunday Night Heat,* and I have to say that it was probably the lamest load of garbage that wrestling has ever produced.

It really disturbed me to see The Dudley Boyz singing Christmas carols and talking with Santa Claus. This supports my theory that they have turned into complete wimps since arriving in the WWF. They follow every stupid fad and seem to need the fans' support in everything they do.

The WWF has completely messed up Buh Buh Ray and D-Von, formerly one of my favorite tag teams, now one of my most hated. The ECW Dudleys were tough beyond measure. They were anti-social, didn't care what fans thought, and they put people through tables because *they* wanted to, not because the fans wanted them to. The old Dudleys would've put Santa through a table immediately. They would never have waited until the end of the show.

Something has happened to the Dudleys during their WWF stint. I don't know what garbage Vince McMahon said to them, but I miss the Dudleys that put Terri through a table, beat up Mae Young, and took it to Edge and Christian and The Hardy Boyz at WrestleMania 2000.

The Dudleys are not hardcore. They no longer know the meaning of the word.

MIKE BUECKERT
Osler, Saskatchewan

SIN-FUL

Having just watched WCW Sin, I have to say that it was a waste of money. The whole show was pretty forgettable, but the only match that kept me glued to the tube was the cruiserweight title match between Chavo Guerrero Jr. and Shane Helms. That's the kind of wrestling WCW should have on its programs, not matches with horrid interference.

Bring back the wrestling!

DANNY VOLLMER
Gilroy, CA

PWI HOTLINE EXTRA!

YOUR ANSWERS TO OUR QUESTION OF THE WEEK!

Question of the Week: How would the demise of ECW affect the wrestling industry? (January 16 to January 22, 2001)

Hotline callers respond: "If ECW folds, it confirms that wrestling is slowing down," said Hank Rollins of Philadelphia. "And that's not good for the business at all."

"I don't know how it would affect the wresting business," said Ernie Niles of Austin, Texas. "I mean, it would let guys like Rob Van Dam and Yoshihiro Tajiri move on and shine on bigger stages, but I feel that the more competition there is out there, the stronger the business will be."

"I don't think the demise of ECW would have a huge effect on the business," said Tim Kearney of Jordan, New York. "Sure, ECW helped to revolutionize the sport, but what has the promotion done lately? Not much."

Is Trish Stratus readying herself to become Trish *McMahon?* Maybe. Reader Rob Leanter seems to think it's a possibility. We, however, aren't quite so sure that's Trish's motive.

☎ AT LEAST WCW SIGNED THEM

I'm an outraged Chris Daniels fan. What WCW allowed Scott Steiner to do to both Daniels and Michael Modest on the January 23 *Nitro* was completely ridiculous. Daniels and Modest were both wrestling their butts off, providing real wrestling fans with what real wrestling fans want—a solid wrestling match—when Steiner ran into the ring and attacked them both. I don't know how other wrestling fans out there feel, but I might never watch *Nitro* again because of that. It was wrong, and Daniels and Modest deserved better.

RYAN PETERS
Woodlawn, PA

TRISH McMAHON?

I don't get why WWF fans are so outraged about Vince McMahon's relationship with Trish Stratus. What's the big deal? Trish is a sultry, sexy lady, and Vince is a powerful, rich, and virile man. It only makes sense that they'd get together. Who knows, maybe one day Trish will have to change her name to Trish McMahon. Wouldn't that be interesting?

ROB LEANTER
Colorado Springs, CO □

BACK ISSUES OF THE Wrestler

Don't miss a single issue of the magazine that has thrilled wrestling fans for two generations, THE WRESTLER! Complete your collection of the most respected wrestling publication in the world! Supplies are limited, so don't delay—order today!

March 1979: Backlund vs. Ladd: Did Bruno's "Interference" Cost Ladd The WWWF Title? Also: Angelo Mosca, Dick Murdoch, Peter Maivia, Bob Orton Jr., Bockwinkel-Rhodes, Brisco-Race, Crusher Blackwell, Lewin-T. Funk.

May 1979: Paul Jones-Rick Steamboat Feud: Who Is Really To Blame? Also: Valiants, Jack Brisco, Larry Hennig, Johnson-King, Lanza-Mulligan, Chief Jay Strongbow, Snuka-Patera.

July 1979: Ernie Ladd's Claim: "Mr. Wrestling II Uses A Loaded Mask!" Also: Backlund-Race, Andre-Baker, Bruno Sammartino, Nick Bockwinkel, Dick Slater, Sonny King, Valiants, Stan Hansen.

Sept. 1979: A New—And Deadly—Feud For Rick Steamboat. Also: Roddy Piper, Superstar Graham, Backlund-Brower, Cyclone Negro, Greg Gagne, The Bruiser-Brody, Dino Bravo, Mil Mascaras, Hussein Arab.

Dec. 1979: Is Andre Ready To Quit Wrestling? Also: Harley Race-El Halcon, Superstar Graham, Steve Keirn, Volkoff-Bruno, Sheik-Mascaras, Igor-Lewin, Dusty Rhodes, Putski-Brower.

April 1980: Did Ken Patera Destroy Dusty Rhodes' Bionic Elbow? Also: Terry Funk, Kevin Von Erich, DiBiase-Backlund, Bockwinkel & Heenan, Baba-Race, Mr. Wrestling II, Youngblood & Steamboat.

Aug. 1980: The Reign Of Bloodshed Begins: Stevens & Valentine Win The NWA Tag Team Title! Also: Kerry Von Erich, Backlund & Skaaland, Nick Bockwinkel, Zbyszko-Bruno, Keirn-Muraco, Samoans, Wrestling II-Idol.

June 1981: Bruno Sammartino: "I Want To Break Stan Hansen's Neck!" Also: Ted DiBiase, Garea & Martel, Mike Graham, Mongolian Stomper, Piper-Superstar, Verne Gagne, Tommy Rich.

Sept. 1980: Why Ernie Ladd Says ... "I'm Tired Of Being Your King." Also: Rick Steamboat, Mad Dog Vachon, Bugsy McGraw, Patera-Patterson, Manny Fernandez, Bob Backlund, Greg Gagne, Mike Sharpe.

Oct. 1980: Kevin Von Erich Wins The Missouri Title From Kevin Von Erich! Also: Mr. Wrestling II, Pedro Morales, Superstar Graham, Dusty Rhodes, Idol-Race, Rick McGraw.

Feb. 1981: Larry Zbyszko's Claim: "Tony Garea Begged Me Not To Hurt Him!" Also: The Grappler, Race-Patera, Hussein Arab, Humperdink-Rhodes, Gilberts, Mr. Wrestling II, Bravo-Bockwinkel.

Oct. 1981: Is The Funk Family At War? Why Terry Funk And Dory Funk Jr. Were Forced To Wrestle. Also: Backlund-Patterson-Mosca, Harley Race, Rhodes-Khan, Kevin Sullivan, Flair-Patera, Verne Gagne.

Jan. 1982: Rich vs. Masked Superstar: Can Tommy Rich Survive As Georgia's Last Hero? Also: Kiwis, Bockwinkel-Atlas, Mascaras-Steamboat, Sullivan-Taylor, Bruno Sammartino.

March 1982: U.S. Champion Slaughter vs. Former NWA Champion Race: How Harley Race's Attempt To Win An "Easy" Title Ended In Disaster. Also: Jimmy Snuka, Flair-Idol, Steve Keirn, Steamboat-Patterson, Fuji-Albano-Saito, Bruno Sammartino Jr., Bruiser-Sullivan.

Aug. 1982: Nick Bockwinkel: "Tommy Rich Is Too Stupid To Be Champion!" Also: Putski-Adonis, Blackjack Mulligan Jr., Roddy Piper, Rick Steamboat, Lawler-Kaufman, Mike Graham.

April 1982: How Jack Brisco Controls Ric Flair's Championship Destiny. Also: Tito Santana, Valentine-Atlas, Bob Roop, Armstrongs, John Studd, Eric Embry.

June 1982: Ric Flair vs. Rick Steamboat: How The NWA Belt Strangled Wrestling's Greatest Friendship. Also: Piper-Armstrong, Hussein Arab, Bruno Sammartino, Adonis & Ventura, Butch Reed.

July 1982: Harley Race—His Destiny Is In The Hands Of Tommy Rich. Also: Rick Steamboat, Chief Jay Strongbow, Buzz Sawyer, Ric Flair, Roddy Piper.

Sept. 1982: Dusty Rhodes Returns To Florida: The Tragic Comeback That Should Not Have Happened. Also: Manny Fernandez, Armstrong-Piper, Blassie-Mulligan, Japan, Bockwinkel-Hogan.

Dec. 1982: Morales vs. Snuka: Does Pedro Deserve To Be Intercontinental Champion? Also: Bob Orton Jr., Kamala, Rich & Rhodes, Barry Windham, Ted DiBiase, JYD-Bockwinkel, Oliver Humperdink.

Jan. 1983: Ivan Putski Humiliates Cowboy Bob Orton: Can The Grand Wizard Pick Up The Pieces? Also: Barry Windham, Muraco-Sawyer-Rich, Nick Bockwinkel, Flair-Youngblood-Steamboat, Fabulous Kangaroos.

Feb. 1983: Exclusive Coverage: Nick Bockwinkel Regains The AWA Title From Otto Wanz. Also: Backlund-Graham, Rich-Sawyer, Barry Windham, Martel & Garea, McDaniel & Piper, Kamala.

May 1983: What Will Happen When The Samoans Become Too Smart For Capt. Lou Albano? Also: Tommy Rich, Terry Allen, Eddie Gilbert, Kerry-Race, Ladd & Rhodes, Flair-Orndorff.

June 1983: Flair-Windham Match Spurs Controversy: Should The NWA Champion Be Allowed To Choose His Challengers? Also: Ivan Koloff, Bruiser Brody, Kerry Von Erich, Andre-Kamala, Brazil-Valentine, Gagnes-Martel.

July 1983: Ric Flair: "I Wrestle The Men Backlund Is Afraid Of." Also: Putski-Adonis, Kevin Sullivan, Bob Roop, Martel-Heenan.

Sept. 1983: Nick Bockwinkel Forces Hulk Hogan Into Exile: And Only The Fans Can Bring Him Back. Also: Briscos, Blackwell-Kerry-Race, Paul Ellering, Mulligan & Windham.

Nov. 1983: Target—Harley Race! Can Dusty Rhodes Fulfill His American Dream A Third Time? Also: Rick Rude, Rotundo-Kabuki, Gagne & Brunzell, Tito Santana, Von Erichs-Freebirds.

Dec. 1983: The Night The AWA World Title Was Stolen From Mil Mascaras. Also: Roddy Piper, Larry Zbyszko, Dino Bravo, Fabulous Ones, Garvin & Sunshine.

March 1984: Is Tito Santana Trying To Blackmail The WWF? Also: Wayne & Sawyer, Hogan-Race, David Von Erich, Jesse Ventura.

June 1984: David Von Erich—We'll Never Forget You. Also: Billy Jack, Flair-Race, Bockwinkel-Bravo, Brickhouse Brown.

July 1984: Tommy Rich Is Back! And He Owes It All To The Fans. Also: Valiant-Rhodes, Ric Flair, Mike Von Erich, Billy Jack.

Aug. 1984: Garvin vs. Roberts: "Hands Of Stone" Crushes "The Snake." Also: Freebirds-Devastation Inc., Sawyer-Sullivan, Lawler & Dillon, McDaniel-Race.

Sept. 1984: Kerry Von Erich Wins The NWA World Title: For David ... For Texas ... For Wrestling! Also: Road Warriors-Bundy & Superstar, Johnson & Atlas-Piper & Orndorff, Billy Jack-Sawyer.

Nov. 1984: The $50,000 Full-Nelson Challenge Match: Billy Jack Gets Revenge Against Superstar Graham. Also: Piper-Hogan, Heenan & Saito, Brody & Hansen, Von Erichs.

Dec. 1984: The Tully Blanchard-Rick Steamboat Feud: Will Dusty Rhodes End It ... Or Make It Worse? Also: Tito Santana, Martel-Atlas, D. Funk, Mike Von Erich, Williams-Taylor.

Jan. 1985: Kerry Von Erich: "I've Got Ric Flair's NWA Title Within My Grasp." Also: Albano & Lauper, Koloffs & Kernodle, Road Warriors, Lawler & Rude, Scott McGhee.

Feb. 1985: Greg Valentine Wins Tito Santana's Intercontinental Title ... But Does He Deserve To Be Champion? Also: Ronnie Garvin, Warriors-Sheepherders, Flair-Billy Jack, Nikita Koloff.

April 1985: Six-Man Riot! Road Warriors & Ellering vs. Rhodes, Rich, & Anderson. Also: Tonga Kid, tomorrow's stars, Adams-Kevin, Flair-Jack, Terminators.

June 1985: Are The WWF Rulebreakers Singling Out Barry Windham For Destruction? Also: Zbyszko-Backlund, Rhodes-Blanchard, Tommy Rich, Oliver-Haynes.

July 1985: It's A Dog's Life ... And Junkyard Dog Wouldn't Trade It With Anyone! Also: Backlund-Martel, Kernodle-Koloff, Butch Reed, Hernandez & Sunshine, Mike Graham.

Aug. 1985: Ten Days Of Blood And Glory: The Road Warriors Invade Japan! Also: Terry Taylor, Magnum T.A., Bugsy McGraw, Sheik & Volkoff-Windham & Rotundo, 20th anniversary.

Oct. 1985: David Shultz Gets An NWA Title Shot: Ric Flair—"I Wrestle The Men Hulk Hogan Is Afraid Of!" Also: Misty Blue, Rick Martel, Kendall Windham, George Steele, Killer Brooks, wrestling greats' all-time top 10.

June 1986: Kerry Reveals His Secret: "I've Told Magnum T.A. How To Beat Ric Flair!" Also: Steve Williams, Hogan-Orton, Flair-Bockwinkel, Lex Luger.

Nov. 1986: Morton & Gibson Take A Trip To Badstreet U.S.A.: The Rock 'n' Roll Express vs. The Freebirds. Also: Eddie Gilbert, Hogan-Orndorff, Mike Von Erich, Mulligan-Bass.

Dec. 1986: Ric Flair's NWA Title Reign: Last Chance To Silence The Critics! Also: Nikita Koloff, Gilbert & Sting, Hogan-Piper, Abdullah-Adams, Nick Bockwinkel.

Jan. 1987: Bobby Heenan's Bitter Crusade To Destroy Hulk Hogan. Also: Borne & Sawyer, Garvins, Ted DiBiase, Misty Blue Simmes.

Feb. 1987: Tragedy Strikes Wrestling: Magnum T.A. Needs Your Prayers Now More Than Ever. Also: Roberts-Steamboat, Crusher Yurkof, Terry Gordy, Wendell Cooley.

March 1987: Ivan & Khrushchev's Kremlin Orders: Crush Nikita Koloff's Russian Revolution! Also: Barry Windham, One Man Gang, Brian Adias, Savage-Steamboat, Jimmy Snuka.

June 1987: The Hart Foundation vs. The Can-Ams: Special Analysis Of This WWF Superfeud! Also: Nick Bockwinkel, Paul Orndorff, Rhodes & Murdoch, Steve Williams.

July 1987: Missy Hyatt: Will She Kiss And Tell In The WWF? Also: Chris Adams, Hart Foundation, Luger & Horsemen, Nikita-Cornette, Stan Hansen.

Sept. 1987: Independence Day! Also: Hennig-Bockwinkel, Hart Foundation, Koloffs, Bubba Rogers, Missy Hyatt.

Oct. 1987: The Honky Tonk Man Wins The Intercontinental Title: Is Randy Savage The Fans' Last Hope. Also: Kerry Von Erich, Ken Patera, Sting-Gilbert, Horsemen-Freebirds, Zbyszko-Gagne.

Dec. 1987: Hulk Hogan: Will He Be Drowned By The New Wave Of Challengers? Also: Hennig-Lawler, Windham-Steiner, Flair-Williams, Brutus Beefcake, Ronnie Garvin.

Jan. 1988: The Experts Agree: The Road Warriors Will Turn Bad In 1988! Also: Koloff-Taylor, Curt Hennig, Duggan-DiBiase.

Feb. 1988: Ric Flair Admits: "I'm Nothing Without The NWA Belt!" Also: Kerry Von Erich, Jim Cornette, Hogan-Andre, Hennig-Lawler, Terry Taylor.

March 1988: After Four Years As Champion ... Only Hulk Hogan Can Beat Hulk Hogan. Also: Warriors-Demolition, Steve Williams, Luger & Dillon, Calgary, Terry Gordy.

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Aug. 1988: World Tag Title Power Shift! Also: Windham & Luger, Demolition, Taylor-Freebirds, Paul Ellering, Owen & Bret.

Oct. 1988: The Fantastics Declare: "We Will Not Share Our Fans With The Rock 'n' Roll Express!" Also: Rhodes-Windham, Curt Hennig, Roberts-Rude, Rougeaus, Jim Garvin.

Jan. 1989: The Horsemen Destroyed! The World Title Gained! But The Midnight Express Must Still Prove Themselves! Also: Top Guns, Hart & Rougeaus, Andre-Savage-Hulk, Terry Gordy, Kevin Von Erich.

Feb. 1989: The Road Warriors: "Sting, Dusty, & The Fans Can Go To Hell!" Also: Madusa Miceli, Blue Blazer, Warrior-Hogan, Bigelow-Gordy, Eddie Gilbert.

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Aug. 1989 (Special Issue): Supercard Sunday! Exclusive Coverage Of WrestleMania V And Clash Of Champions VI. Also: Kerry-Embry, Randy Savage, Great Muta, Ted DiBiase, Teddy Long.

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Jan. 1994: Roasted, Broiled, Fried, Baked ... Any Way You Cook It, Hogan's A Chicken! Also: Rude-Flair, Bagwell & Scorpio, Jim Cornette, Jerry Lawler, Hansen & T. Funk-Abdullah & Sullivan.

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Jan. 1999: Stone-Cold's Personal Survivor Series. Also: Rock-HHH, NWA, Bret Hart, Howard Finkel, three-way title matches.

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☐ SEP 79	☐ JUL 83	☐ JAN 87	☐ JUL 89	☐ DEC 91	☐ SEP 94	☐ SEP 97	☐ AUG 99
☐ DEC 79	☐ SEP 83	☐ FEB 87	☐ AUG 89	☐ JAN 92	☐ NOV 94	☐ OCT 97	☐ SEP 99
☐ APR 80	☐ NOV 83	☐ MAR 87	☐ SEP 89	☐ FEB 92	☐ JAN 95	☐ NOV 97	☐ OCT 99
☐ AUG 80	☐ DEC 83	☐ JUN 87	☐ OCT 89	☐ MAR 92	☐ MAR 95	☐ DEC 97	☐ NOV 99
☐ SEP 80	☐ MAR 84	☐ JUL 87	☐ NOV 89	☐ APR 92	☐ APR 95	☐ HOL 97	☐ DEC 99
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PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED
CLASSIC
From the February 1995 issue

WCW CIVIL WAR!

WILL EX-WWF STARS SPARK A REVOLUTION?

Ever since Hulk Hogan arrived in Atlanta this summer, WCW has begun to look more and more like the WWF of old. That might result in bigger crowds and more sales for pay-per-views, but some of the established WCW stars don't like this trend

By Dave Lenker

THE NEWS TRAVELED fast and was greeted by two completely different parties. Hulk Hogan, Brutus Beefcake, Hacksaw Duggan, and Jimmy Hart couldn't have been happier. Ric Flair, Sherri Martel, Paul Orndorff, Paul Roma, and other WCW rulebreakers couldn't have been angrier.

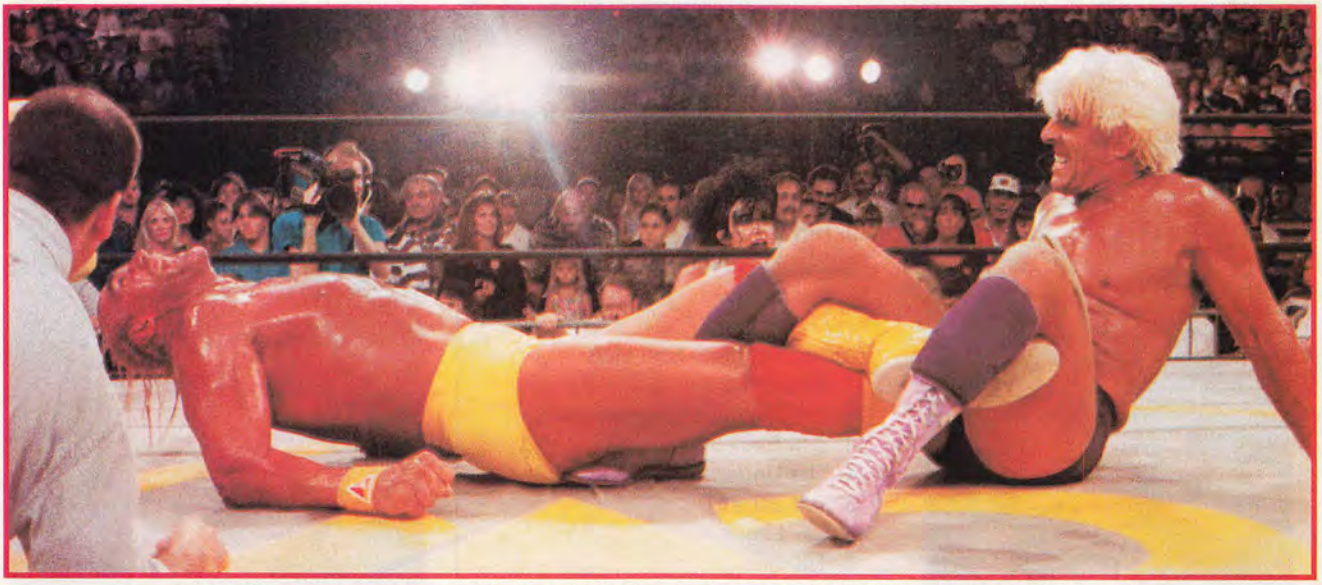
Their reaction went something like this:

"What the heck is going on here?"

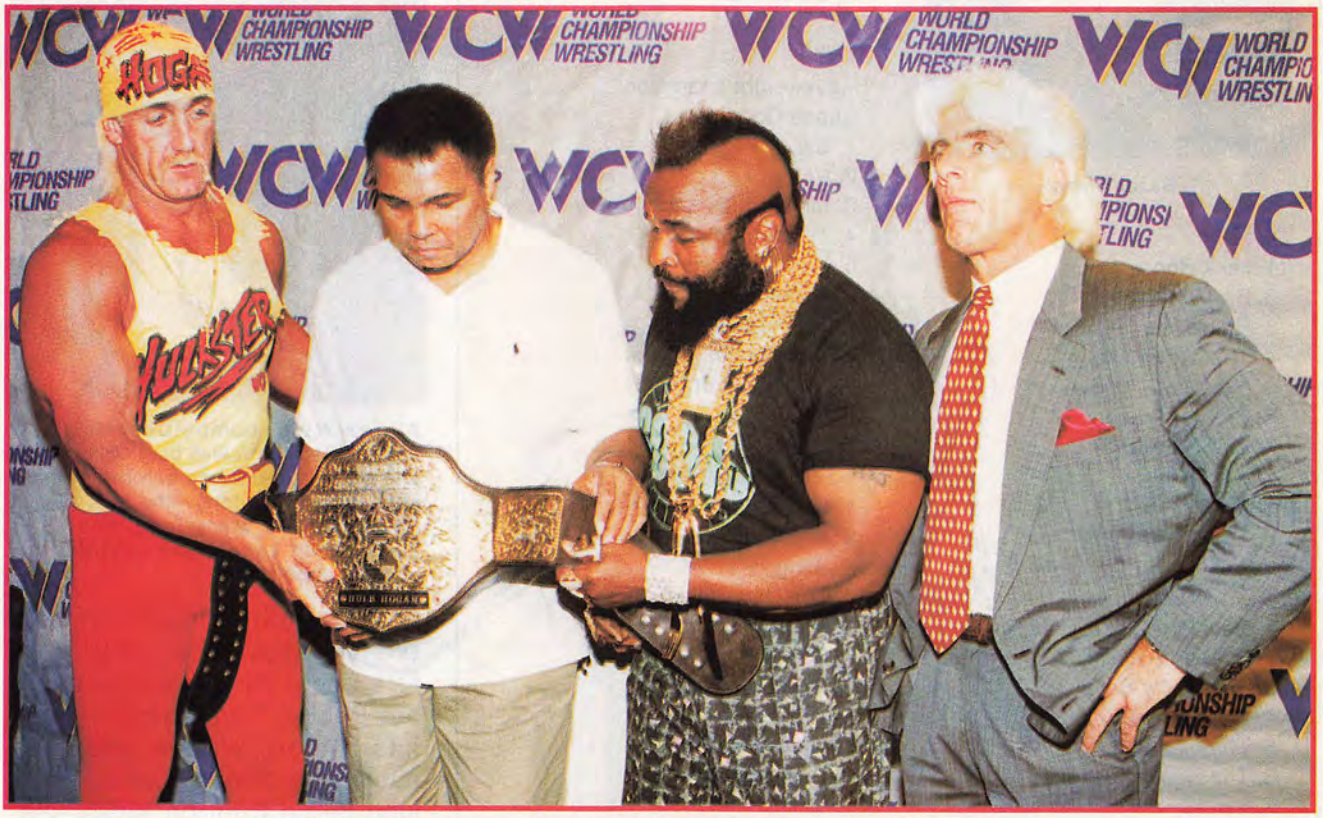
To understand, you must answer this trivia question: What was the main event of WrestleMania I?

The answer, of course, is Hulk Hogan and Mr. T vs. Paul Orndorff and Roddy Piper.

And the news that got such a



A lot of fans did a lot of cheering when Hulk Hogan showed up in WCW to challenge Ric Flair. Not everyone in WCW was cheering about the arrival of Hogan and other ex-WWF stars, though.



Some thought it wasn't fair at all that Mr. T (shown with Hogan, Flair, and Muhammad Ali) was named guest referee for a Hogan-Flair retirement match in WCW. Hogan and T were old friends in the WWF, after all.

mixed reaction was that Mr. T had been named special guest referee for the Hogan-Flair match at Halloween Havoc.

That announcement brought up some very important concerns. WCW is looking more and more like the WWF of the mid- and late-1980s, to the point where WCW promoters are being accused of copying everything the WWF used to do. Take a quick look at the WCW roster: Hogan, Duggan, and The Guardian Angel own three spots in the top 10. They're all former WWF wrestlers (Guardian Angel as Big Bossman). The Honky Tonk Man, a former WWF Intercontinental champion, recently arrived in WCW and was deemed a top contender to the TV title before he even wrestled a handful of competitive matches.

Beefcake is always around. Hart, the former WWF manager,

PWI RATINGS February 1995

Razor Ramon

TOP 10
1. Hulk Hogan
2. Bret Hart
3. Razor Ramon
4. The Undertaker
5. Hacksaw Duggan
6. Big Van Vader
7. Bob Backlund
8. Jim Neidhart
9. Sid Vicious
10. Tony Anthony

TAG TEAMS
1. Paul Orndorff & Paul Roma
2. Marcus Bagwell & The Patriot
3. The Nasty Boys
4. The Headshrinkers
5. The Gangstas
6. The Bushwhackers
7. PG-13
8. Public Enemy
9. The Smokin' Gunns
10. The Rock 'n' Roll Express

WCW
World champion: Hulk Hogan
1. Hacksaw Duggan
2. Johnny B. Badd
3. Big Van Vader
4. Steve Austin
5. Dustin Rhodes
6. The Honky Tonk Man
7. The Guardian Angel
8. Sting
9. Dave Sullivan
10. Arn Anderson

WWF
World champion: Bret Hart
1. Razor Ramon
2. Jim Neidhart
3. Bob Backlund
4. The Undertaker
5. Jeff Jarrett
6. Lex Luger
7. Tatanka
8. King Kong Bundy
9. Irwin R. Schyster
10. Owen Hart

ECW
Heavyweight champion: Shane Douglas
1. Sabu
2. 911
3. Mr. Hughes
4. The Sandman
5. Ron Simmons
6. Tommy Dreamer
7. Tasmaniac
8. Dean Malenko
9. Dory Funk Jr.
10. Ian Rotten

MOST POPULAR
1. Hulk Hogan
2. Bret Hart
3. Sting
4. The Undertaker
5. Razor Ramon
6. Davey Boy Smith
7. Hacksaw Duggan
8. Lex Luger
9. Johnny B. Badd
10. Dustin Rhodes

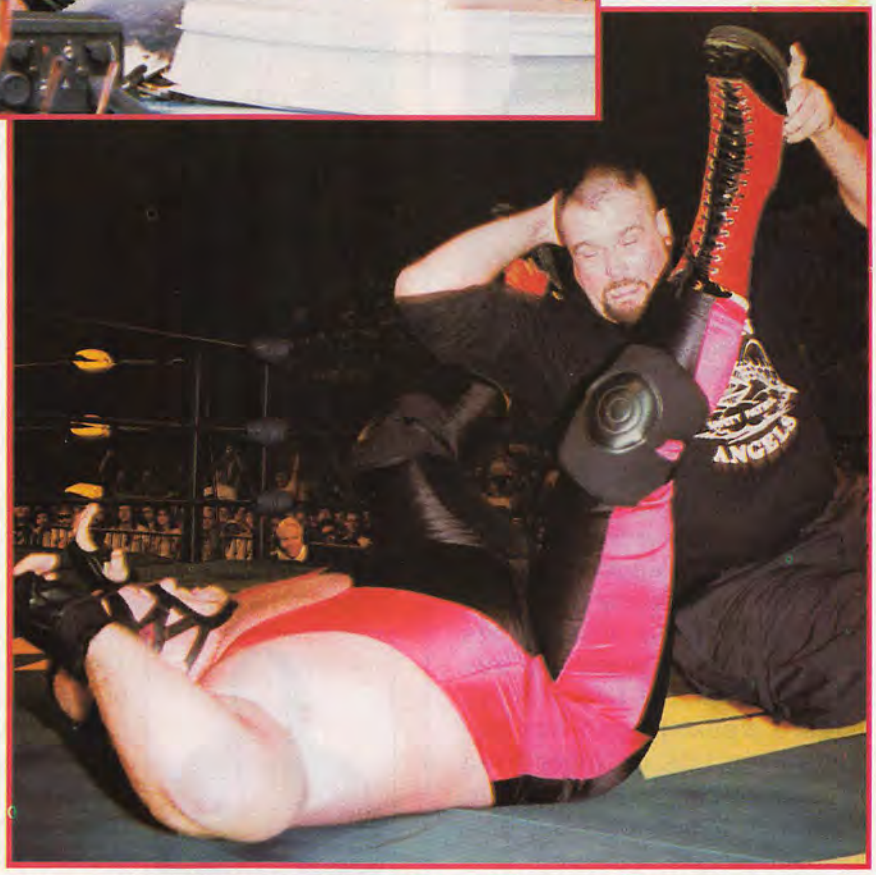
MOST HATED
1. Bob Backlund
2. Big Van Vader
3. Tatanka
4. Jim Neidhart
5. Jerry Lawler
6. Ric Flair
7. Shawn Michaels
8. Owen Hart
9. Diesel
10. Shane Douglas

All ex-WWF competitor Hacksaw Duggan had to do was beat Dallas Page and other mid-carders before getting a shot at—and winning—the U.S. title at Fall Brawl '94. Many long-time WCW stars would have given anything for such an opportunity.

is now managing Hogan in WCW. Jesse "The Body" Ventura is out as TV commentator, but Bobby "The Brain" Heenan has a more visible role than ever. And "Mean" Gene Okerlund is out front on WCW telecasts, making it look even more like the WWF.

They're taking over the whole federation—if they haven't done so already. WCW mainstays are being overrun by these unwelcome (by some) visitors who were invited into WCW by executives waving huge contracts in their faces.

Remember the old days, when wrestling fans debated which fed-



Jimmy Hart used to manage The Honky Tonk Man during their WWF days (left) and may have used his newfound influence in WCW to get HTM a good deal there. The Guardian Angel (Big Bossman in the WWF) got high-profile matches with the likes of Vader (below) soon after arriving in WCW.

eration was better, WCW or the WWF? The argument has become moot. WCW doesn't exist. Now there's Vince McMahon's WWF and Ted Turner's WWF.

"Their arrogance is incredible," said one WCW mainstay who requested anonymity for fear of bucking the company line. "They just came in here like they owned the place and did whatever they wanted. You know, there used to be a time when WCW offered fans a real choice between the WWF's circus wrestling and real, no-nonsense wrestling. Now there's no choice. I feel bad for the fans."

Don't feel *too* bad. It's been a long time since fans in such numbers crowded into WCW arenas and watched WCW cablecasts and pay-per-view events. WCW as the WWF has been a smashing success. Unfortunately for the WCW promoters who are enjoying the fruits of this success, there are the makings of a revolution in WCW.

In the not-so-old days, WCW was split between fan favorites and rulebreakers. Now the split is between former WWF wrestlers and WCW mainstays. The line is no longer drawn with the rulebook. Hogan started the war when he won the World title from Flair in his first WCW match and proclaimed, "Everything old is new again." He meant happy days are here again, which meant that the old WWF, which was dying in the WWF, had been revived in WCW. Flair isn't happy about that.

"Hogan didn't have to do what he did," Flair said. "He made it out like his victory was a victory for a way of life or something. The last thing I need is Hogan talking about what's right and what's wrong. If you ask me, WCW was a pretty good place before he came along."

Whereas he used to be *the* star in WCW, Flair was suddenly turned into a mere co-star. And the WCW of 1994 and 1995 is looking nothing like the WCW of the late-1980s and early-'90s.

While Hogan battles Flair with Mr. T as special guest referee, Bob Backlund and Bret Hart are reviving the WCW of the 1980s in the WWF of the 1990s (in terms of *style* of wrestling, at least).

"Which would you rather have?" Hogan said, without really addressing the issue. "This is a bottom-line

It wasn't just ex-WWF *wrestlers* who were landing cushy jobs in WCW in 1994. Gene Okerlund was one of the ex-WWF broadcasters who made the jump.

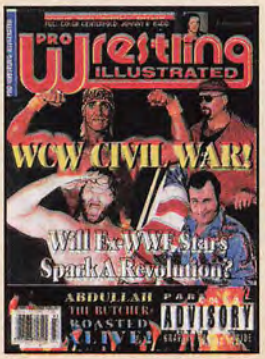
sport, and the bottom line is on our side. If you ask me, WCW has been a lot better place since me and my buddies arrived, and I'm sure most people would agree."

Hogan's influence has been the most striking. Prior to his arrival, the WCW World title was defended at least two or three times a week. Hogan has defended his title no more than once a week—except during WCW's European tour—and only against Flair.

Meanwhile, Hacksaw Duggan—who was never good enough to win a major title in the WWF—is the U.S. champion, and Honky Tonk Man is moving up the ladder of contention. Many WCW insiders think Jimmy Hart has exerted undue influence on WCW promoters. Is Hart calling the shots? Is Hogan? Are both?

The next WCW pay-per-view could pit former WWF stars against WCW mainstays. And it could get very ugly. □

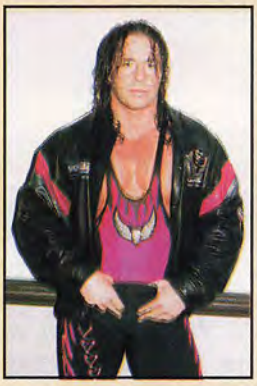
PWI, February 1995



The cover: Although the "WCW Civil War" story was featured most prominently, *PWI* also placed a special parental advisory on the cover, warning readers about some graphic photos of an Abdullah the Butcher-Abbudah Singh match inside. Singh (now Mahoney) breathed fire on the Butcher and seared some of the flesh on his chest and arm. Though he suffered second- and third-degree burns, Abdullah wrestled the match and came back to beat his sadistic rival.

The centerfold: Marc Mero was featured for the first time in the *PWI* centerfold, and this was back in the days in which he wrestled as Johnny B. Badd. Badd was the reigning WCW TV champion, having beaten Lord Steven Regal for the gold. It was his first major championship.

Identity Crisis: Marcus Bagwell had a very unusual request for his tag team partner at the time, The Patriot. Because he feared that lurking under the mask of The Patriot was an old enemy just waiting for the right time to betray him, he told *PWI,* "If The Patriot doesn't unmask—we're through." The two ultimately split on good terms, as The Patriot moved on to the WWF ... and revealed himself to be Del Wilkes.



Two-Time ... Two-Time: Bret Hart, who two months earlier became the first man to be ranked number one in the *"PWI* 500" in two consecutive years, was featured in "Press Conference." He talked in depth about his feud with his brother Owen and also noted that if he couldn't pick himself as the top man in the "500," he'd choose Shawn Michaels ("He's the one I think can carry wrestling to the next level").

No Thanks: Jim Cornette, always a great self-promoter, wrote a piece detailing the reasons Bob Backlund needed him to be his manager. He said he could do for Backlund in the mid-1990s what Arnold Skaaland did for him two decades earlier. Cornette was right when he said Backlund was capable of winning the WWF title again ... but he did it without a manager this time.

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PWI®

TOP 10

1 SCOTT STEINER
275, Detroit, MI
(1) WCW World champion

2 KURT ANGLE
233, Pittsburgh, PA
(2) WWF World champion

3 KENSUKE SASAKI
251, Tokyo, Japan
(4) IWGP heavyweight champion

4 STEVE AUSTIN
252, Victoria, TX
(3) No. 2 contender: WWF World title

5 GENICHIRO TENRYU
235, Tokyo, Japan
(5) All-Japan Triple Crown champion

6 KEVIN NASH
356, Detroit, MI
(-) No. 2 contender: WCW World title

7 CHRIS JERICHO
225, Winnipeg, Manitoba
(-) WWF Intercontinental champion

8 TRIPLE-H
284, Greenwich, CT
(-) No. 3 contender: WWF World title

9 RICK STEINER
258, Detroit, MI
(-) WCW U.S. champion

10 THE ROCK
272, Miami, FL
(9) No. 4 contender: WWF World title

Chris Jericho

TAG TEAMS

1 BUH BUH RAY & D-VON DUDLEY
Combined weight: 585 pounds
(4) WWF World tag team champions

2 SEAN O'HAIRE & CHUCK PALUMBO
Combined weight: 526 pounds
(5) WCW World tag team champions

3 CHRISTIAN & EDGE
Combined weight: 465 pounds
(1) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title

4 SATOSHI KOJIMA & HIROYOSHI TENZAN
Combined weight: 493 pounds
(3) IWGP International tag team champions

5 KANE & THE UNDERTAKER
Combined weight: 673 pounds
(-) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title

6 MARK JINDRAK & SHAWN STASIAK
Combined weight: 513 pounds
(-) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title

7 JEFF & MATT HARDY
Combined weight: 422 pounds
(6) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title

8 KRONIC
Combined weight: 622 pounds
(-) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title

9 TAIYO KEA & JOHNNY SMITH
Combined weight: 470 pounds
(-) All-Japan International tag team champions

10 BULL BUCHANAN & THE GOODFATHER
Combined weight: 665 pounds
(9) No. 4 contenders: WWF World tag title

WCW

World Champion:
SCOTT STEINER
(C) 275, Detroit, MI

1—RICK STEINER
(–) 258, Detroit, MI
2—KEVIN NASH
(–) 356, Detroit, MI
3—JEFF JARRETT
(2) 230, Nashville, TN
4—DALLAS PAGE
(–) 260, Point Pleasant, NJ
5—SHANE DOUGLAS
(1) 255, Pittsburgh, PA
6—LEX LUGER
(–) 275, Chicago, IL
7—CHAVO GUERRERO JR.
(6) 210, El Paso, TX
8—BUFF BAGWELL
(–) 240, Marietta, GA
9—LANCE STORM
(8) 231, Calgary, Alberta
10—THE CAT
(7) 235, Atlanta, GA

WWF

World Champion:
KURT ANGLE
(C) 233, Pittsburgh, PA

1—CHRIS JERICHO
(8) 225, Winnipeg, Manitoba
2—STEVE AUSTIN
(2) 252, Victoria, TX
3—TRIPLE-H
(5) 284, Greenwich, CT
4—THE ROCK
(3) 272, Miami, FL
5—CHRIS BENOIT
(1) 218, Edmonton, Alberta
6—THE UNDERTAKER
(4) 328, Death Valley, CA
7—RAVEN
(10) 245, Short Hills, NJ
8—THE BIG SHOW
(–) 500, Aiken, SC
9—TEST
(–) 302, Toronto, Ontario
10—ALBERT
(–) 320, Boston, MA

ECW

World Champion:
RHINO
(C) 285, Detroit, MI

1—THE SANDMAN
(1) 244, Philadelphia, PA
2—JUSTIN CREDIBLE
(2) 227, Waterbury, CT
3—STEVE CORINO
(3) 219, Sea Isle City, NJ
4—C.W. ANDERSON
(4) 230, Raleigh, NC
5—JERRY LYNN
(6) 224, Minneapolis, MN
6—TOMMY DREAMER
(5) 265, Yonkers, NY
7—NOVA
(8) 214, Bricktown, NJ
8—SPIKE DUDLEY
(7) 155, Providence, RI
9—E.Z. MONEY
(9) 239, Atlantic City, NJ
10—YOSHIHIRO TAJIRI
(–) 224, Tokyo, Japan

NWA

NWA Champion:
MIKE RAPADA
(C) 231, Colorado Springs, CO

1—TERRY KNIGHT
(1) 220, Asheville, NC
2—PAUL DIAMOND
(3) 240, San Antonio, TX
3—HOTSTUFF HERNANDEZ
(2) 280, Houston, TX
4—DR. LUTHER
(4) 245, Calgary, Alberta
5—911
(6) 312, Philadelphia, PA
6—BLADE BOUDREAUX
(8) 230, New Orleans, LA
7—STONE MOUNTAIN
(7) 350, Stone Mountain, GA
8—STEVE CORINO
(–) 219, Sea Isle City, NJ
9—BLACK RAIN I
(9) 254, Honolulu, HI
10—BUNKHOUSE BUCK
(–) 252, Bucksnort, TN

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue. while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

For period ended February 10, 2001

BAD 2 THE BONE WRESTLING: Champion—Manslaughter; **1**—Dennis Dempsey; **2**—Atomic Dog; **3**—Ox Harley; **4**—BioHazard; **5**—Mr. Big; **6**—PsychoDelic; **7**—T.J. Lightnin; **8**—Billy Black; **9**—The Regulator; **10**—Alister Fear.

BIG JAPAN PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Tamoaki Honma; **1**—Shadow WX; **2**—Ryuji Yamakawa; **3**—John Zandig; **4**—Jun Kasai; **5**—Abdullah Kobayashi; **6**—Kintaro Kanemura; **7**—Men's Teoh; **8**—Daisuke Sekimoto; **9**—Kamikaze; **10**—Ryuji Ito.

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—Cheetah Master; **1**—Glen Osbourne; **2**—J.J. The Ring Crew Guy; **3**—Christopher Daniels; **4**—Reckless Youth; **5**—Charlie Haas; **6**—Low-Ki; **7**—Ty Street; **8**—Russ Haas; **9**—Mr. Ooh La La; **10**—Boogie Woogie Brown.

FRONTIER MARTIAL ARTS WRESTLING: Champion—Kodo Fuyuki; **1**—Tetsuo Kuroda; **2**—Masato Tanaka; **3**—Kintaro Kanemura; **4**—Jado; **5**—Gedo; **6**—Hisakatsu Oya; **7**—Ryuji Yamakawa; **8**—Manmos Sasaki; **9**—Hideki Hosaka; **10**—Kyoko Inoue.

GLOBAL PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Tim Storm; **1**—Bull Schmitt; **2**—Blade Boudreaux; **3**—Treach Phillips Jr.; **4**—James Grizzly; **5**—Scott Storm; **6**—The Virus; **7**—Dexter Hardaway; **8**—Rude Dawg; **9**—Tim Warcloud; **10**—Matt Murphy.

MARYLAND CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Jimmy Cicero; **1**—Adam Flash; **2**—Bruiser; **3**—Corporal Punishment; **4**—Julio Dinero; **5**—Gillberg; **6**—The Policy; **7**—Chad Bowman; **8**—Ronnie Zukko; **9**—Romeo Valentino; **10**—Kelly Bell.

MICHINOKU PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Great Sasuke; **1**—Tiger Mask; **2**—Jinsei Shinzaki; **3**—Gran Hamada; **4**—CIMA; **5**—Magnum Tokyo; **6**—Suwa; **7**—Pentagon; **8**—Tiger Angel; **9**—Sanohiro Takagi; **10**—Kazuya Yuwasa.

NWA MID-SOUTH: Champion—Brickhouse Brown; **1**—Blade Boudreaux; **2**—Bulldog Raines; **3**—Miles Long; **4**—Jett Logan; **5**—Danny B. Good; **6**—Ricky Murdock; **7**—Chris Champion; **8**—Khan; **9**—Tracey Smothers; **10**—Joey Venture.

PRO WRESTLING NOAH: Champion—Title Vacant; **1**—Mitsuharu Misawa; **2**—Jun Akiyama; **3**—Vader; **4**—Takao Omori; **5**—Shinya Hashimoto; **6**—Yoshihiro Takayama; **7**—Akira Taue; **8**—Yoshinari Ogawa; **9**—2 Cold Scorpio; **10**—Naomichi Marufuji.

RHODE ISLAND WRESTLING ALLIANCE: Champion—Wolverine; **1**—Danger Boy Alfredo; **2**—Danny Cama; **3**—Dave Padula; **4**—Thrash; **5**—Mael; **6**—Lord Davios; **7**—Jake Roberts; **8**—Danny Boy O'Callahan; **9**—The Intern; **10**—Bill Thomas.

SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Cham Pain; **1**—Gotti; **2**—Scab; **3**—Frank Parker; **4**—Jesse Drive; **5**—Lazarus; **6**—Kross; **7**—Major DeBeers; **8**—Dewey Cheatum; **9**—Natrone Steele; **10**—Rick Link.

UNIFIED CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Al Savage; **1**—Big Nasty; **2**—Joe Kane; **3**—Chad Cheetum; **4**—Steve Southern; **5**—Tony Sweatt; **6**—Marcel Pringle; **7**—Aiky Breaky Kid; **8**—Raine Quapone; **9**—Viper; **10**—Bob Armstrong.

NEW JAPAN

IWGP Champion:
KENSUKE SASAKI
(C) 251, Tokyo, Japan

1—HIROYOSHI TENZAN
(3) 270, Tokyo, Japan
2—MANABU NAKANISHI
(7) 235, Tokyo, Japan
3—TOSHIAKI KAWADA
(1) 245, Ashikaga, Japan
4—MASA CHONO
(2) 235, Tokyo, Japan
5—KEIJI MUTO
(9) 245, Yamanashi, Japan
6—YUJI NAGATA
(5) 228, Tokyo, Japan
7—SHINJIRO OTANI
(–) 215, Yokohama, Japan
8—SATOSHI KOJIMA
(4) 223, Tokyo, Japan
9—JUSHIN LIGER
(–) 222, Hiroshima, Japan
10—MINORU TANAKA
(8) 219, Tokyo, Japan

ALL-JAPAN

Triple Crown Champion:
GENICHIRO TENRYU
(C) 235, Tokyo, Japan

1—TOSHIAKI KAWADA
(1) 245, Ashikaga, Japan
2—TAIYO KEA
(4) 235, Honolulu, HI
3—KENSUKE SASAKI
(–) 251, Tokyo, Japan
4—MIKE BARTON
(3) 263, Austin, TX
5—STEVE WILLIAMS
(2) 265, Norman, OK
6—HIROSHI HASE
(9) 225, Tokyo, Japan
7—JOHNNY SMITH
(10) 235, Manchester, England
8—MASA FUCHI
(6) 225, Tokyo, Japan
9—KEIJI MUTO
(–) 245, Yamanashi, Japan
10—KENDALL WINDHAM
(–) 264, Sweetwater, TX

EMLL

EMLL Champion:
UNIVERSO DOS MIL
(C) 240, Mexico City, Mexico

1—EL HIJO DEL SANTO
(1) 180, Tulancingo, Mexico
2—ATLANTIS
(2) 180, Guadalajara, Mexico
3—MR. NIEBLA
(4) 185, Cualtitlan, Mexico
4—NEGRO CASAS
(–) 175, Mexico City, Mexico
5—EMILIO CHARLES JR.
(10) 222, Mexico City, Mexico
6—ULTIMO GUERRERO
(3) 173, Mexico City, Mexico
7—BLUE PANTHER
(9) 215, Mexico City, Mexico
8—TARZAN BOY
(–) 218, Mexico City, Mexico
9—SCORPIO JR.
(–) 195, Nezahaulcoyoti, Mexico
10—SHOCKER
(–) 185, Guadalajara, Mexico

AAA

AAA Champion:
LATIN LOVER
(C) 190, Monterrey, Mexico

1—HEAVY METAL
(9) 180, Mexico City, Mexico
2—PERRO AGUAYO JR.
(8) 165, Zacatecas, Mexico
3—HECTOR GARZA
(1) 220, Monterrey, Mexico
4—EL TEXANO
(7) 225, Mexico City, Mexico
5—PIRATA MORGAN
(6) 221, Mexico City, Mexico
6—ABISMO NEGRO
(3) 210, Pachua, Mexico
7—OCTAGON
(2) 180, Monterrey, Mexico
8—CIBERNETICO
(4) 235, Mexico City, Mexico
9—JERRY ESTRADA
(10) 239, Montclova, Mexico
10—EL CANEK
(–) 235, Mexico City, Mexico

Ratings Analysis

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating over 200 wrestlers in 22 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important–and respected–ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

No news is* not *good news ... We told you in this space in the May 2001 issue of PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED that we expected to have a decision on the future of ECW, at least as it related to what we were going to do about ECW on our ratings pages, by the time this issue went to press.

Unfortunately, that isn't the case. We still could only make educated guesses at press time. The future of the company continued to look quite bleak. **Paul Heyman** certainly was doing everything in his power to either find some sort of TV deal or, perhaps preferably, find a buyer who could keep the company alive.

As you probably read in "Ringside" on page 12, **Jim Ross** expressed a strong interest in having Heyman join the WWF's creative team, and a lot of experts figured there was a good chance he would. Now if that were to happen (and Heyman didn't sell ECW), perhaps **Vince McMahon** would allow Heyman to still run the occasional show under the ECW banner.

Yes, the whole situation is pretty confusing, but things should become a little clearer in the next few months. We think. Maybe.

The ECW ratings, you'll notice, barely changed from last issue to this issue. You'll also see that no ECW wrestlers made the Top 10. You don't really need us to explain that.

Rhino

Rhino may have the potential to be the best ECW World champion of all-time, and he may technically hold both the World title and the TV title, but if his promotion isn't running shows, those titles are meaningless and there's no justification for us putting him in our Top 10.

Good news for Rhino is that he could soon get a chance to earn a spot in the Top 10 through his work in the WWF. He, **Jerry Lynn**, and **Justin Credible** have all signed with the company, and **Yoshihiro Tajiri** is likely to do the same in the near future.

We should have a much more definitive understanding of ECW's future by the time the July issue of this magazine has been completed.

Same old same old? It wouldn't be fair at all to start leveling criticism at **Eric Bischoff** and the new ownership of WCW before the sale was actually finalized, would it?

And when this issue went to press, that sale had not been finalized. In fact, it was at least a few weeks away as this column was being finished. But a look at the WCW ratings and a quick peek at the Top 10 reveal what some are calling a disturbing trend in WCW.

Since **Vince Russo** left, some of the men dominating WCW are the men who dominated the company when Bischoff last served as WCW president. Of course, who *doesn't* believe **Scott Steiner** deserves a huge push and the World title? He is the federation's most marketable star and again takes the top spot in our Top 10. The only other WCW stars in the Top 10 are U.S. champ **Rick Steiner**, a veteran who had barely been on TV in the last year, and **Kevin Nash**, who's also not one of those marketable *up-and-coming* stars WCW so desperately needs. In fact, many feel that one of the reasons WCW is in such bad shape is that guys like Nash and **Hulk Hogan** were pushed too hard for too long and at the expense of younger talent.

Kevin Nash

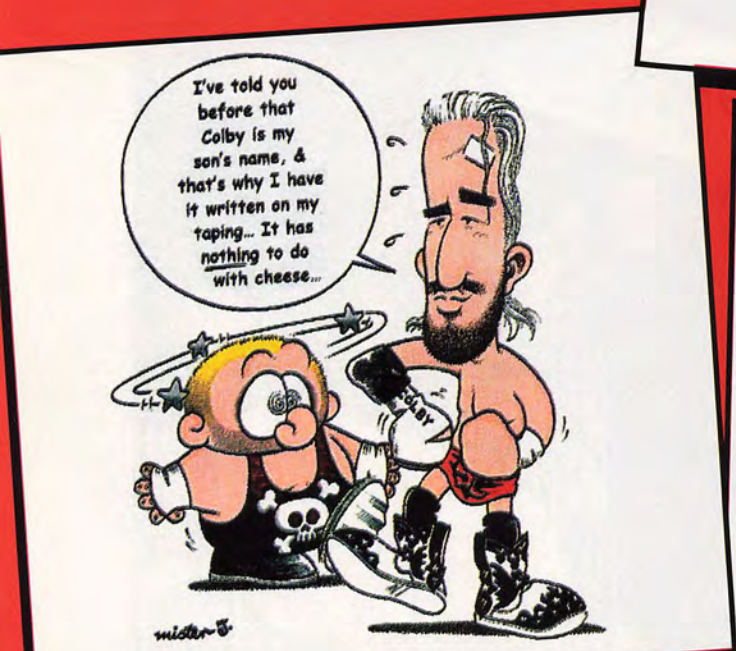
In addition to Nash and the Steiners, included high in the WCW top 10 are such veterans as **Lex Luger** and **Dallas Page**. They, too, were around for WCW's best years ... and they were still being featured prominently when things got very, very bad.

Of course, we must remember Bischoff wasn't in charge of WCW in February (though he was exerting some influence), when these ratings were compiled, so it remains to be seen what his specific plans for revamping the company entail. We're not suggesting that veterans like Nash, Page, Rick Steiner, Luger, and even **Sting** be cut from the roster. They can be an important part of a revitalized WCW, but if those guys are going to continue dominating the main events and getting all the World title matches, we have to question whether we should be optimistic about the future of WCW under "Easy E."

That's all for now! If you have questions or comments regarding our ratings, we want to hear from you. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. □

drawing BLOOD

By Jason Conlan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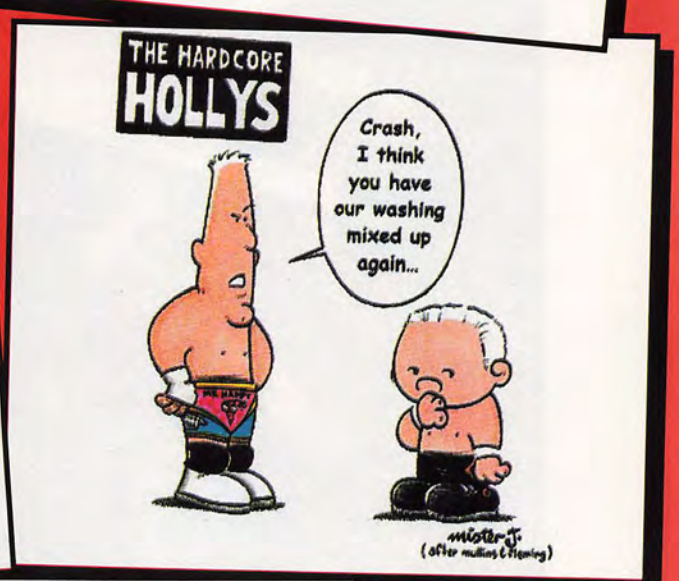
misterJ.



HOT SHOT

The Sandman isn't known as a high-flyer, but he'll still take to the air on occasion. While pursuing Steve Corino and the ECW World heavyweight title this winter, Sandman launched himself off the ring apron with a chair and came down with a legdrop on Corino's vulnerable torso—a move very similar to the one that broke WCW's Johnny the Bull's hip last year. But Sandman doesn't care about injuries—or much of anything else. As long as he can make it to the back—where he generally has a case or two of tall boys waiting for him—he's a happy camper.

Photo by George Tahinos

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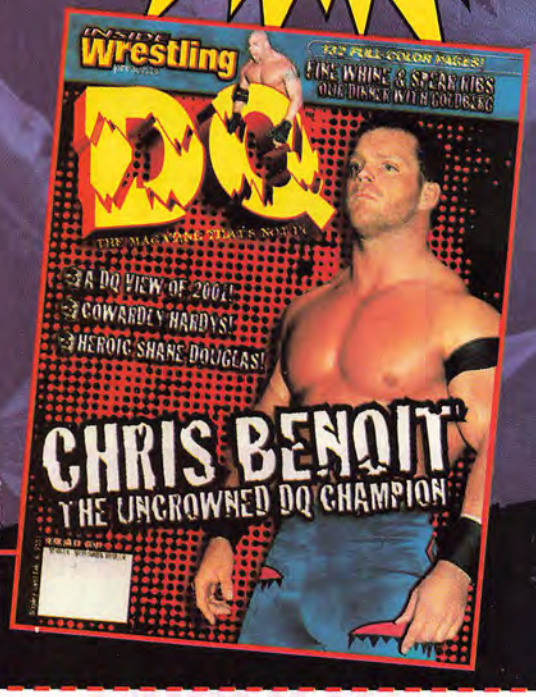

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